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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JOHN RUSKIN

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J. Ruskin.

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THE WORKS OF JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

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GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
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1904

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LIBRARY EDITION

VOLUME V

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME III

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME III

CONTAINING

PART IV

OF MANY THINGS

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

"Accuse me not
Of arrogance, ...
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men,
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence."

WORDSWORTH

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The drawing of Plate A was reproduced by half-tone process in *The Artist* for July 1897, and again, March 1900; that of Plate B, on a somewhat larger scale than here, in *Studies in Both Arts* (Plate ix.), where a passage from *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xiii., was given with it, under the title of "The Aiguilles and their Pedestal"; and that of Plate F, by autotype, in the large paper edition of *Studies in Ruskin* (1890), Plate 5, and again, by half-tone process, in *The Artist* for July 1897.

The following drawings were exhibited at the Ruskin Exhibition at the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1901: Plate 12, No. 243; Plate 13, No. 114; Plate 14, No. 310; Plate 15, No. 205. The drawings of Plates 12 and 13 were also exhibited at the Coniston Exhibition in 1900 (Nos. 102 and 54); and that of Plate G at Manchester in 1904 (No. 371).

INTRODUCTION TO VOL. V

(In the chronological order, Vol. IV. is followed in succession by Vols. VIII.–XII.; the present Introduction should thus be read after that to Vol. XII.)

THE second volume of *Modern Painters* was published in April, 1846; the third and fourth volumes appeared in the early part of 1856. The story of Ruskin's life and work during the intervening decade is told in the Introductions to Vols. VIII. to XII. We have now to pick up the thread of the interrupted book, and as the third and fourth volumes were written and published much at the same time, it will be convenient to treat them together here.

We left Ruskin, with *The Stones of Venice* and much occasional work well off his hands, setting out once more with his parents for Switzerland (Vol. XII. p. xxxvii.). His father, as we have said (*ibid.*, p. xxvii.), was impatient to see the great book continued. The good-humoured chaff of friends pointed the author in the same direction. "*Modern Painters*, I tell him," wrote Rossetti, "will be old masters before the work is ended."[1] He needed change of thought and scene, and amid the stillness of the Alpine meadows, and the solemn silence of the hills, he resumed his interrupted work.

In his final epilogue to *Modern Painters*, Ruskin (as already mentioned) speaks of the whole book as inspired by the beauty and guided by the strength of the snows of Chamouni. We have seen that this was the case with the first volume (Vol. III. p. xxv.), which was written after a Swiss tour in 1842. The second volume similarly followed upon his foreign tour in 1845. He was in Switzerland again in 1846 and 1849, and for a shorter time in 1851. On all these occasions he was collecting impressions, observations, and memories which were to be utilised in the later volumes of the book. To these earlier tours we must, therefore, revert, before we can take up the

[1] *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham*, p. 171.

thread in 1854. The book, though interrupted by other tasks, was never out of the author's mind, and in every sojourn among the mountains he was preparing himself, by "walking with Nature" and "offering his heart a daily sacrifice to Truth," to affirm the lessons which he had learnt. Even amidst his work at Venice, his mind was set on his earlier task, and we have seen his satisfaction in finding a point of contact between *Modern Painters* and his architectural work.[1] The study of the Renaissance suggested to him the thought that the formalism of the classical architecture had killed the love of nature which had been conspicuous in the earlier Gothic art, and that the romantic movement, making the landscape of Turner possible, was a revolt against the imprisonment of the spirit within the Five Orders. So, too, when at Venice the news of Turner's death had reached him, he went on indeed with his immediate task, but registered a vow to use his increased knowledge to the greater honour of the Master. "I will make *Modern Painters*," he wrote to his father (January 1, 1852), "so complete a monument of him, *D.V.*, that there will be nothing left for the Life but when he was born, and where he lived, and whom he dined with on this or that occasion. All which may be stated by anybody."

Already in 1845 Ruskin had commenced the studies necessary for the later volumes. He returned home in that year by the St. Gothard, as already related (Vol. IV. p. xxxv.), in order to find the sites or scenes of some of Turner's later drawings. He described his studies in letters to his father:—

> "Faido, *Friday, August* 15.—I have found his [Turner's] subject[2] or the materials of it here; and I shall devote to-morrow to examining them, and seeing how he has put them together. The stones, road, and bridge are all true; but the mountains, compared with Turner's colossal conception, look pigmy and poor. Nevertheless, Turner has given their actual, not their apparent size. . . . I have got two sketches to-day (Saturday) of Mr. Turner's subject, and a specimen of the stones of the torrent—gneiss coloured by iron ochre proceeding from decomposing garnets. The road on the left is the old one, which has been carried away in the pass, and that on the right is the new one, which crosses the stream by the shabby temporary bridge. It has been carried away twice, so that there are

[1] See Vol. X. pp. xlvii., 207 *n.*

[2] That is, for the drawing in Ruskin's possession of "The Pass of Faido," engraved as the frontispiece to *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ("The Gates of the Hills"), and analysed in that volume, ch. ii. and Plates 20 and 21.

the remains of two roads and two bridges, and three new bridges of wood, which Turner has cut out, keeping the one he wanted. The gallery on the left is nearly destroyed — it protected the road from a cataract which has now taken another line, and has left the worn channel you see."

"FAIDO, *Sunday, 17th.*—. . . On looking at my two sketches, made yesterday, I find them wonderfully like the picture, but it is beautiful to see the way Turner has arranged and cut out. I never could have dreamed of taking such a subject." [1]

These were the studies and drawings used in the chapter (ii.) of the fourth volume on "Turnerian Topography."

In the following year Ruskin was again in Switzerland, and he has described in *Præterita* (ii. §§ 189, 190), with illustrative extracts from his diary, how he occupied himself with watching phases of the sunset, and the forms and colours of trees, rocks, and clouds. But it was in the Swiss tour of 1849, partly with his parents and partly by himself, that the principal studies for the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters* were made; for that reason, an account of the tour was reserved (Vol. IX. p. xxiii.) for the present place.[2] His diaries and letters of the period are indeed on almost every page a commentary on the book. The scenes which left the deepest impress were Vevay, Chamouni, the Rhone Valley, and Zermatt. Nearly all the most beautiful and the most important passages in the third and fourth volumes embody impressions received or observations recorded at one or other of those places. They went first to Vevay, and it was there, among the narcissus meadows, then scarce touched by villas and railways,

[1] See also Vol. IV. p. xxiv. *n.*

[2] The itinerary of the tour of 1849 was as follows: Folkestone (April 15–18), Boulogne, by rail to Paris (April 24), Sens (April 25), Mont Bard (April 26), Dijon, Champagnole (April 29), Geneva (April 30), Chambéry (May 2), the Grande Chartreuse, St. Laurent (May 4), Chambéry (May 5), and thence to Geneva and Vevay. Leaving his parents there, Ruskin went on a short tour with Richard Fall (for whom see Vol. II. p. 429) to Chamouni (May 12) and Martigny (May 17), returning to Vevay (May 18). Thence to St. Martin's; a month later, he went with his parents, by Sallenches (June 10), to Chamouni (June 13). There they stayed a month, returning to Geneva (July 18). Leaving it again after a brief stay, they spent some days at St. Martin's and went on to St. Gervais, whence Ruskin started off by himself, beginning with the Tour of Mont Blanc from Chamouni over the Col de Bonhomme to Chapiu (July 27), and thence over the Col de la Seigne to Courmayeur (July 28). Crossing the Col de Ferret to Martigny he went next to Zermatt (Aug. 2), and after a few days there, returned by St. Nicholas (Aug. 10) to Chamouni (Aug. 15). He spent three nights at the inn on the Montenvers (Aug. 22) and returned to Chamouni (Aug. 25), thence proceeding by Sion and Martigny to Visp and Leuk (whence he ascended the Gemmi Pass), and so to Geneva (Aug. 30), where he rejoined his parents, and Dijon (Sept. 4) to Paris (Sept. 8), Amiens (Sept. 14) and Calais (Sept. 16).

of to-day sunk upon me like the departure of youth. First I had a hot march among the vines, and between their dead stone walls; once or twice I flagged a little, and began to think it tiresome; then I put my *mind* into the scene, instead of suffering the body only to make report of it; and looked at it with the possession-taking grasp of the imagination—the true one; it gilded all the dead walls, and I felt a charm in every vine tendril that hung over them. It required an effort to maintain the feeling: it was poetry while it lasted, and I felt that it was only while under it that one could draw, or invent, or give glory to, any part of such a landscape. I repeated 'I am in *Switzerland*' over and over again, till the name brought back the true group of associations, and I felt I had a soul, like my boy's soul, once again. I have not insisted enough on this source of all great contemplative art. The whole scene without it was but sticks and stones and steep dusty road.

"I tried the same experiment again on a group of old cottage and tower near Blonay, in coming down; the tower, as I found afterwards, dated 1609 on a stone forming the top of one of its quaint windows, as opposite [reference to a sketch], but, seen in the distance, remarkable only for its upper open window, letting a bit of the far-off blue mountains of Meillerie clear through it, and its conical roof mingling with their peaks. All this I longed to draw, but said to myself that 'the bit of fence and field underneath would not do.' A minute after I corrected myself, and by throwing my mind full into the fence and field, as if I had nothing else but them to deal with, I found light and power, and loveliness, a Rogers vignette character put into them directly. I felt that the human soul was all—the subject nothing.

"Not so, when I passed 'a little further on'[1] past the low chapel that I drew last time I was here, with its neighbouring gate, inscribed 'pense a ta fin'; and came down among the meadows, covered half a fathom deep with the emblem by which God suggests that thought."[2]

A little later, on the way to Chamouni, the same experience came to him:—

"Sallenches, *June* 1849.—I had a pleasant walk up the hill towards St. Gervais this afternoon. . . . I felt in this walk, being somewhat tired, very forcibly again how much the power of nature depended upon the quantity of mind which one could give to her. I had an exquisite winding path—a road—with bits of rocky bank,

[1] Milton: *Samson Agonistes*, line 2.
[2] Here, in the diary, follows the passage on the grass just given.

> and flowery pasture, and cottages and chapels. I had the whole valley of the Arve, from the Grotte de Balme to St. Gervais. I had the Doron and its range behind me, the mighty cliffs of the Varens beside me, the Nant d'Arpenaz like a pillar of cloud at their feet; Mont Blanc and all its aiguilles with the Verte and Argentière in front of me; marvellous blocks of granite and pines beside me, and yet with all this I enjoyed it no more than a walk on Denmark Hill. Setting myself to find out the reason of this, I discovered that when I confined myself to one thing—as to the grass or stones, or the Doron, or the Nant d'Arpenaz, or the Mont Blanc — I began to enjoy directly; because then I had mind enough to put into the thing, and my enjoyment arose from the quantity of mental and imaginative energy which I could give it; but when I looked at all together, I had not, in my then state of weariness, mind enough to give to all, and none were therefore of any value. I thought this a most instructive lesson; both showing how the majesty of nature depends upon the force of human spirit, and how each spirit can only embrace at a time so much of what has been appointed for its food, and may therefore rest contented with little, knowing that if it throw its full energy into that little, it will be more than enough; and that an over-supply of food would only be an over-tax upon its energies. This crushing of the mind by overweight is finely given by Forbes."[1]

This experience was utilised, and some of the notes from the diary embodied, in the present volume (p. 183, below). A month at Chamouni followed, and this, for *Modern Painters*, was among the most fruitful times in Ruskin's life. With the faithful Couttet for his guide, he rambled during long days among the glaciers, or sauntered in the valley, examining, observing, sketching.[2] And at evening time we may see him leaning, as he says in his diary (July 8), "on the blocks of lichened wall beside the road, exchanging good-nights with the passers-by, and listening as their voices left me to the filling of the valley by the sound of the waves of the Arve, mixed with cattle bells and many strange and dim mountain sounds, mingled in confusion like the grey stones of the wall I leaned upon." Thus did "beauty born of murmuring sound" pass into his thoughts and words. But in company with the hours of restful thought came strenuous labours.

He worked upon the stones of Chamouni as diligently as upon

[1] *Travels through the Alps*, ch. iv., pp. 56–57 in Coolidge's reprint of 1900.

[2] For an extract from his diary at this time, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvii. § 30 (author's note); for his measurements of mountain angles, *ibid.* ch. xviii. § 15 (author's note).

Chamouni

View from the Hôtel de l'Union

the *Stones of Venice*. He noted all the angles of the Aiguilles, observed every fleeting effect of cloud, examined the rocks, collected the minerals, gathered the flowers, and weighed the sand in the streams.[1] His observations were entered up in his diaries and notebooks as carefully as were his architectural studies at Venice (Vol. IX. p. xxiv.). His industry in drawing was as great. Two characteristic drawings of Chamouni are here given. At a later time, when he was examining his materials for the composition of the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, he made a catalogue of his sketches at Chamouni. This is given below as showing the amount of work he did; it will be seen that no less than forty-seven drawings belong to the period of study which we are now describing.[2] An extract from his diary will show how his days were spent:—

> "CHAMOUNI, 28*th day* (and for this year, last,—unless I return from Zermatt): *Evening, July* 10.—It has been a glorious one; I was working from Mont Blanc before breakfast, out immediately afterwards; made some notes of Aiguille Bouchard, went on to the

[1] See Vol. XI. p. 237.

[2] The following "Catalogue of Sketches in neighbourhood of Mont Blanc" is from his diary of 1854. "1849 B" refers to a second and shorter stay at Chamouni when he was on his way to Venice in the autumn of that year (see Vol. IX. p. xxiv.):—

1. Mont Blanc and its aiguilles, from Geneva 1849
2. Same sketch continued, with the Buet and Sixt mountains, and camera lucida outlines of Mole below; on the back, camera lucida of Salève . . . 1849
3. The Brezon, from inn window, Bonneville . . . . . 1849 B
4. End of Bonneville on the other side of the bridge 1849
5. Limestone promontories of the Brezon, a little beyond last sketch; on the back an elaborate sketch of Mont Blanc de St. Gervais, and an oven at St. Martin's 1849
6. Valley of Cluse, and Aiguille de Varens 1849
7. Ravine near Maglans 1849
8. Cottage at Maglans; on the back, limestone cliffs at entrance of Valley of Cluse 1849
9. Top of Mont du Reposoir, above Sallenches 1849
10. Valley of Cluse, looking back from Sallenches 1846
11. Mont Blanc, from St. Martin's 1849
12. Mont Blanc, from St. Martin's, in storm 1849
13. Aiguille Sans Nom, from Les Montets 1844
14. Aiguilles of Chamouni, from Les Ouches 1842
15. Aiguilles of Chamouni, from near Bossons 1844
16. Camera lucida outlines of Mont Blanc, from Chamouni 1849
17. Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni 1849
18. Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni; on the back, a little bit of Petit Charmoz and Blaitière in cloud 1849
19. Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni; on the back, a little bit of Petit Charmoz and Blaitière in cloud 1849
20. Montagne de la Côte, from Chamouni; on the back, a little bit of Petit Charmoz and Blaitière in cloud 1849
21. Top of Mont Blanc, from Chamouni 1849
22. Autumn on the bases of the Aiguilles . . . . . 1849 B
23. The Aiguilles of Chamouni, from the village 1849
24. Camera lucida outline of the same; on the back, camera lucida of Jorasses and Aiguille Dru, and most important sketch of Blaitière 1849
25. Large eye-sketch of Aiguilles of Chamouni, from Chamouni 1849
26. Aiguille Dru, from Chamouni 1849

Source beside the Arveron, somewhat closer than usual, it having changed its bed entirely within the last three days, and running four feet deep where I used to walk; took slopes of Dru, from just beside the Arveron bridge; then climbed the avalanche with Couttet to foot of rocks near Montanvert; could not get upon them; awkward chasm between the ice and them; and at the only place where we could get upon them, another at the other side which made it a risk to pass the ridge. Got on them at last, however, higher up, and took from them specimens 27, 28 . . . [notes on these, and on the geology of the rocks]. After examining the rocks here — note that the one under the cascade is called the Rocher du Chataigne—we climbed to one almost isolated promontory of pines immediately on the right of the bare rocks. At the top of it the glacier was seen against the sky through the most fantastic pines, and the grand rocks falling to the Source, nodding forwards (like a wave about to break [1]), and the great cascade bounding from its narrow way, with the look of a wildly revolving wheel—I was irresistibly reminded by its action of the gesture of the leapers into

27. Shoulders of Charmoz, from Chamouni 1849
28. Aiguille du Plan, from foot of Breven, half a mile beyond village of Chamouni . 1849
29. Aiguille Charmoz, from bottom of valley, beneath it 1849
30. Angles of Aiguille Dru; and on back, reflections in Lake of Geneva . . . 1849
31. Aiguille Bouchard, from valley 1849
32. Aiguille Bouchard and Glacier du Bois 1849
33. Aiguilles of Chamouni, from foot of Flegère 1849
34. General contours of the same 1849
35. The same, from ascent beyond Glacier des Bois 1844
36. Aiguille Charmoz, from window of the "Union" 1849
37. Outlines of Aiguille du Plan 1849
38. Aiguille du Plan, from its base 1849
39. Continuation of the same sketch 1849
40. Aiguille Blaitière, from near its base 1849
41–43. Views of the spur of Aiguille Blaitière 1849
44. Aiguille Blaitière, from the foot of its glacier 1849
45. Details of Aiguille Charmoz 1849
46. Aiguille Charmoz, from Montanvert 1849
47. Cleavage of Petit Charmoz 1849
48. Aiguille Verte, from near Flegère 1844
49. Shadow of Aiguille Dru on cloud, from Montanvert 1849
50. Aiguilles with Mont Blanc, from Aiguille Bouchard 1844
51. Col du Géant, from Aiguille Bouchard 1844
52. Aiguille d'Argentière, from flank of Buet 1844
53. Top of Montagne de la Côte, from the flank of Mont Blanc 1844
54. Pines close to Glacier des Bois 1849
55. Pines at foot of Montanvert 1849
56. Rocks near Les Ouches (above Les Montets) 1844
57. Aiguilles Rouges, from window of "Union" 1849
58. Side of the Breven 1849
59. Aiguilles Rouges, from Source of Arveron 1844
60. Limestones of the Valley of Sixt 1844
61. The same, better drawn (at head of valley) 1849
62. View from my window at Chapiu; on the back, Aiguille de Varens in cloud . 1849
63. View from the top of the Col de la Seigne 1849
64. Mont Blanc, from the Allée Blanche 1849

[1] Ruskin uses this image in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xv. § 2.

J Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc.

La Cascade de la Folie, Chamouni

From the drawing in the possession of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.

the lake, especially the man waving his hat in Cruikshank's illustrations to Pee-wit.[1] There is something in its great weight of water which makes it differ in its fling from all other cascades I have ever seen—its waves bound like masses of stone, and nearly all the way down, the solid water is seen yellowish among the small clouds of blue spray which beat down with it. . . . [References follow to diagrams of the curves of the falling water and of the angles of the rocks.] I never saw a more wonderful scene than the glen at this point with its small, but steep torrent, its mighty stones cast down from the moraine above, and its vertical walls, shutting us in to the glacier and the awful cataract beneath it. Nor have I yet seen a more noble and burning sunset than was on the Charmoz and lower Verte to-night—a hot, almost sanguine, but solemn crimson. . . . I have much to thank God for, now and ever."

Laborare est orare. Ruskin's thankfulness found its expression in those careful and loving studies, in words and drawings, of the Chamouni aiguilles which fill so large a portion of the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*.

His first month at Chamouni was now over, and his parents returned from the Alps to Geneva. He, meanwhile, attended by Couttet and George, was permitted to have another month to pursue his mountain-studies. First, he made the familiar Tour of Mont Blanc, proceeding by St. Gervais and Contamines over the Col du Bonhomme to Chapiu, and thence over the Col de la Seigne to Courmayeur. The first two days are described in a letter to his father:[2]—

"COURMAYEUR, *Sunday afternoon.*
"[*July 29th*, 1849].

"MY DEAREST FATHER,—(Put the three sheets in order first, 1, 2, 3; then read this front and *back*, and then 2, and then 3, front and back.)

"You and my mother were doubtless very happy when you saw the day clear up as you left St. Martin's. Truly it was impossible that any day could be more perfect towards its close; we reached Nant Borrant at twelve o'clock—or a little before; and, Couttet having given his sanction to my wish to get on, we started again soon after one, and reached the top of the Col de Bonhomme about five.

[1] The frontispiece to the second volume (1826) of *German Popular Stories*, with etchings by Cruikshank. In J. C. Hotten's edition (1869), for which Ruskin wrote an introduction (reprinted in a later volume of this edition), the illustration referred to faces p. 202.

[2] Portions of this letter are printed in W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, pp. 113–115.

You would have been delighted with that view—it is one of those lovely seas of blue mountain, one behind the other, of which one never tires—this, fortunately, westward, so that all the blue ridges and ranges above Conflans and Beaufort were dark against the afternoon sky, though misty with its light; while eastward, a range of snowy crests, of which the most important was the Mont Iseran, caught the sunlight full upon them. The sun was as warm, and the air as mild on the place where the English travellers sank and perished,[1] as in our garden at Denmark Hill on the summer evenings.

"There is, however, no small excuse for a man's losing courage on that pass, if the weather were foul. I never saw one so literally pathless—so void of all guide and help from the lie of the ground—so embarrassing from the distance which one has to wind round mere brows of craggy precipice without knowing the direction in which one is moving, while the path is perpetually lost in heaps of shale or among clusters of crags, even when it is free of snow. All however when I passed was serene, and even beautiful, owing to the glow which the red rocks had in the sun. We got down to Chapiu about seven, itself one of the most desolately placed villages I ever saw in the Alps. Scotland is in no place that I have seen so barren or so lonely. Ever since I passed Shap Fells, when a child,[2] I have had an excessive love for this kind of desolation, and I enjoyed my little square châlet window and my châlet supper exceedingly (mutton with garlic). I fell asleep the moment I lay down, in spite of sheep bells and mule scents beneath me, and was never more surprised in my life than at waking at midnight with a very sharp and well-defined sore throat. I thought I must be dreaming of sore throat at first, but it wouldn't go away, and when I woke in the morning it was worse."

He consulted his symptoms, however, and determined to press on to Courmayeur:—

"So we started at half-past six up the wildest Scottish-looking valley, with a glacier in front of us, not at all the sort of thing which one would especially select for the morning ride of a patient with a sore throat. It was too cold to sit on the mule, so I got off and walked until we got into the sun, and then rode up to the

[1] The higher slopes of the Col du Bonhomme are occasionally swept by violent winds and snow-eddies; this was the case on September 13, 1830, when two Englishmen, with guides, perished from cold and exhaustion on the Pass. In fine weather guides delight to point out the scene of the disaster, to give their charges a pleasing sense of adventure.

[2] See *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. ch. xvii. § 13, and Vol. XII. p. xxi.

Col. When we got up, the last cloud—except a small group on the Monts Combin and Velan far away—had melted; Mont Blanc and his whole company of hills were clear, and after again consulting my feelings and pulse, I unpacked my sketch-book, sat down under a stone, and made a memorandum which I do not intend to touch hereafter—as I fancy few artists can show a careful sketch in colour, made at 8000 feet above the sea when suffering under violent sore throat."

The view from the Col de la Seigne sadly disappointed the artist with the sore throat:—

"I made this memorandum (he continues) because I never want to pass that Col again; it is without exception the ugliest and most barren Alpine view, and the most degrading to all the noble objects it encloses, I have ever seen; and, even if I did pass it again, I might pass it twenty times without having the hills so perfectly clear, or the sun so exactly in the right place to show their structure.

"I was still more disappointed for some time as I descended; a glorious white stream of ice at last appeared on the left, and I began to recover my good humour. I walked down the greatest part of the first descent of the Col—like that from the Col de la Balme to Tour."

The traveller halted to refresh himself, and then :—

"We pushed on towards and past the Lac de Combal—a lake of which you will instantly form a strong opinion when I tell you that it is banked up by a heap of débris at one end and choked up by a valleyful of débris at the other. The moraine of the great glacier[1] of the Allée Blanche after this chokes up the valley altogether for a length of at least two miles: I never saw such a mighty heap of stones and dust; the glacier itself is quite invisible from the road (and I had no mind for extra work or scrambling) except just at the bottom, where the ice appears in one or two places; being exactly of the colour of the heaps of waste coal at the Newcastle pits; and admirably adapted therefore to realise one's brightest anticipations of the character and style of the Allée *Blanche.*

"The heap of its moraine conceals, for the two miles of its extent, the entire range of Mont Blanc from the eye. At last you weather the mighty promontory, cross the torrent which issues from its base, and find yourself suddenly at the very foot of the vast

[1] See *Modern Painters,* vol. iv. ch. xv. § 16.

slope of torn granite, which, from a point not two hundred feet lower than the summit of Mont Blanc, sweeps down into the valley of Courmayeur.

"I am quite unable to speak with justice, or think with clearness, of this marvellous view. One is so unused to see a mass like that of Mont Blanc without any snow, that all my ideas and modes of estimating size were at fault. I only felt overpowered by it, and that, as with the porch of Rouen Cathedral, look as I would, I could not *see it*. I had not mind enough to grasp it or meet it; I tried in vain to fix some of its main features on my memory; then set the mules to graze again, and took my sketch-book and marked the outlines; but where is the use of marking contours of a mass of endless, countless, fantastic rock, twelve thousand feet sheer above the eye? Besides, one cannot have sharp sore throat for twelve hours without its bringing on some slight feverishness; and the searching Alpine sun, to which we had been exposed without an instant's cessation from the height of the Col till now —*i.e.*, from half-past ten to three — had not mended the matter; my pulse was now beginning slightly to quicken, and my head slightly to ache, and my impression of the scene is feverish and somewhat painful; I should think like yours of the valley of Sixt."

At Courmayeur Ruskin rested for a day, being physicked by the faithful Couttet, and consoling himself "with the view from my window, not a bad one, of an old Lombard Tower and the range of the Col du Géant." The sketch then made is given in Vol. XII. (Plate vi.). From Courmayeur he went over the Col Ferret to Martigny. The Val Ferret pleased and interested him far more than his walk through the Allée Blanche and the Val de Véni. The following passages are from his diary (Courmayeur, July 28):—

"The most magnificent piece of ruin I have yet seen in the Alps is that opposite the embouchure of the lower glacier of the Val de Ferret, near Courmayeur; the pines are small indeed, but they are hurled hither and thither; twisted and mingled in all conditions of form and all phases of expiring life, with the chaos of massy rocks which the glacier has quashed down or the opposite mountain hurled. And yet, further on, at the head of the valley, there is another in its way as wonderful, less picturesque, but wilder still, the remains of the *eboulement* of the Glacier de Triolet, caused by a fall of an aiguille near the Petites Jorasses—the most phrenzied accumulation of moraines I have ever seen, not dropped one by one into a heap and pushed forward by the ice ploughshare, but evidently borne down by some mingled torrent of ice and rock and flood, with the

swiftness of water, and the weight of stone, and thrown along the mountain sides like pebbles from a stormy sea, but the ruins of an Alp instead of the powder of a flint bed."

Ruskin had been unfortunate in coming down from the Col de la Seigne tired and ill, for there are few walks in the Alps more lovely than that through the pastures and pine woods of the lower valley, with the snows of the Mont Blanc sparkling through the branches; but many travellers will find it hard to dispute the superiority which he attributes to the Col Ferret over the Col de la Seigne:—

> "The view from the Col de Ferret I think finer, although I did not see the best of it, *i.e.*, the Grandes Jorasses, nor the top of the Combin. It is very desolate towards the Great St. Bernard; but the forms of mountain under the Grandes Jorasses are so bold and sweeping, and the distant Col de Seigne with the mountains beyond the Crammont so immeasurably superior to the Col de Ferret itself as a distant object, that I have no hesitation in saying it would be much wiser to cross the Col de Ferret from Martigny and go up as far as the Lac de Combal, or perhaps the Glacier de l'Allée Blanche from Courmayeur, and so return by Val d'Aosta, than to make the tour of Mont Blanc."

Ruskin passed through the Val Ferret in the morning; in evening light the walk in the reverse direction offers some of the sublimest aspects in the Alps; there is none which illustrates more effectively Ruskin's comparison of mountains to cathedrals[1] than the spectacle of the huge shoulder of the Aiguille de Péteret as seen from this point.

From Martigny Ruskin went up to Zermatt for some days, and there made the studies on the cliffs of the Matterhorn which occupy several pages in his fourth volume. One of his numerous drawings of the mountain is here given (Plate D). It is curious, as a contrast with present times, to find that, though it was August, Ruskin had the inn pretty much to himself. "No one has been here," he writes (August 6), "but a party of French and Germans going over the Cervin, and various German botanists and students." He writes his first impressions to his father; possibly we must read a little diplomacy between the lines, for Ruskin, it will be seen, wanted his leave of absence somewhat extended:—

> "[ZERMATT, *August* 6.]— . . . I have had glorious weather, and on Friday I had such a day as I have only once or twice had the like of among the Alps. I got up to a promontory projecting from

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 9.

the foot of the Matterhorn, and lay on the rocks and drew it at my ease. I was about three hours at work, as quietly as if in my study at Denmark Hill, though on a peak of barren crag above a glacier, and at least 9000 feet above sea; but the Matterhorn, after all, is not so fine a thing as the Aiguille Dru, nor as any of the aiguilles of Chamouni. For one thing, it is all of secondary rock . . . [a tear in the paper here]; quite rotten and shaly; but there are other causes for the difference in impressiveness which I am endeavouring to analyse. I find considerable embarrassment in doing so; there seems no sufficient reason why an isolated obelisk, one fourth higher than any of them, should not be at least as sublime as they in their dependent grouping; but it assuredly is not. For this reason, as well as because I have not found here the near studies of primitive rock I expected—for to my great surprise, I find the whole group of mountains, mighty as they are, except the inaccessible Monte Rosa, of secondary limestones or slates—I should like, if it were possible, to spend a couple of days more on the Montanvert, and at the bases of the Chamouni aiguilles—sleeping at the Montanvert. My month from the time I left you at St. Martin's, 26th July, is only up this day three weeks; so that I hope it will do if I am with you at Geneva on Monday evening the 27th. . . ."

Ruskin obtained an extension of time, but not without some alarm on the part of his parents on account of his illness at Courmayeur, and some remonstrances on the score of a temporary interruption of communications.[1] He made good use of his leave in continuing his work among the aiguilles:—

Monday evening [*August* 20].

"My dearest Father,—I have to-night a packet of back letters from Viège . . . but I have hardly time to read them to-night, I had so many notes to secure when I came from the hills. I walk up every day to the bases of the aiguilles without the slightest sense of fatigue (just as I used to walk to [the] Source of Arveron); work there all day, hammering and sketching, and walk down in the evening. As far as days by myself can be happy, they are so; for

[1] Mr. Collingwood (*Life*, p. 115) has printed a portion of a letter from Ruskin to his father bearing on this subject. Pfister was a courier who had been sent by the elder Ruskin to meet his son at Martigny: "(Zermatt, *August* 8), I have your three letters, with pleasant accounts of critiques, etc., and painful accounts of your anxieties. I certainly never thought of putting in a letter at Sion, as I arrived there about three hours after Pfister left me, it being only two stages from Martigny; and besides, I had enough to do that morning in thinking what I should want at Zermatt, and was engaged at Sion, while we changed horses, in buying wax candles and rice. It was unlucky that I lost post at Visp," etc.

Ruskin

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The Matterhorn
(1849)

From the drawing in the possession of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.

I love the places with all my heart—I have no over-fatigue or labour, and plenty of time. By-the-bye, though in most respects they are incapable of improvement, I recollect that I thought to-day, as I was breaking last night's ice away from the rocks of which I wanted a specimen, with a sharpish wind and small pepper-and-salt-like sleet beating in my face, that a hot chop and a glass of sherry, if they were to be had round the corner, would make the thing more perfect. There was, however, nothing to be had round the corner but some Iceland moss which belonged to the chamois; and an extra allowance of north wind."[1]

One of Ruskin's haunts was the glacier at the foot of the Aiguille Blaitière (see vol. iv. ch. xiv. § 16; and Plate 31); from there he scribbled a note:—

"Glacier of Greppond [*August* 21).]

"My dearest Father,—I am sitting on a grey stone in the middle of the glacier, waiting till the fog goes away. I believe I *may* wait. I write this line in my pocket-book to thank my mother for hers which I did not acknowledge last night. I am glad and sorry that she depends so much on my letters for her comfort. I am sending them now every day by the people who go down, for the diligence is stopped. You may run the chance of missing one or two therefore. I am quite well and very comfortable—sitting on Joseph's knapsack laid on the stone. The fog is about as thick as that of London in November—only white, and I see nothing near me but fields of dampish snow with black stones in it."

Three days at the inn on the Montanvert[2] especially pleased him. He had never yet seen anything, he says in his book (vol. iv. ch. xiv. § 6), to equal the view from that spot. The following are extracts from his diary:—

"*August* 22.—I think I never enjoyed any evening so much as this in my life, unless it were one at Champagnole in 1845.[3] I had no idea what this place was, until I sat at the window quietly to-day watching the sunset and the vast flow of the ice, welling down the gorge—a dark and billowy river—yet with the mountainous swell

[1] W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, p. 116.

[2] This was the old inn, built in 1840, at the expense of the Commune of Chamouni, replacing the previous cabin (known as the "Temple de la Nature") itself replaced in 1879 by the present hotel. At Chamouni, Ruskin always stayed at the Union: see Vol. II. p. 426.

[3] Described in a letter, given in Vol. IV. p. xxvii.

and lifted crests that the iron rocks have round it. I have been nearly all day drawing at the Aiguille Blaitière."

"*August* 25.—I have certainly not lately, nor often in old times, felt stronger emotion than in watching the dawn from the Montanvert these three mornings past. Yesterday I saw it when it was still very dark, and Orion burning beyond the Grandes Jorasses; and the whole river of heaven between the hills full of stars; and again, later, when I was watching the increase of the serene clear cold morning light, a beacon intensely bright flashed out on the summit of the Dru; it was the morning star."

And so, too, he writes to his father:—

"Montanvert (*August* 22).

"My dearest Father,—I have been of late taking the same walk regularly every day, to a point a little higher than the top of the Breven and down again—yesterday for very nearly nothing. I shortened the descent to-day by coming here, and I do not know that I ever enjoyed any coming so much in my life. I had no idea what the place was, until I sat at the window quietly to-night, and saw the ice-waves grow dark in the twilight, and the wild ranges of the Aiguilles Rouges relieved against the western sky. Nor have you any idea of it either—in daylight it is white and fragmentary, but the peaks of the Aiguilles Rouges in the sunset and the glow on the Grandes Jorasses would be after your own heart. I am going to stay here till Saturday; I shall send George down to-morrow with this letter, and after that, guides. Dearest love to my mother. I am quite well and have had a most prosperous day, though I cannot say that on the whole the aiguilles have treated me well. I went up Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday to their feet, and never obtained audience until to-day, and then they retired at twelve o'clock, but I have got a most valuable memorandum.

"Ever my dearest Father,

"Your most affectionate son,

"J. Ruskin."

He spent some more happy and busy days at Chamouni—"with a ghost-hunt to-day and a crystal hunt to-morrow;"[1] but at last it was time to leave:—

"Chamouni, *Tuesday evening* (*August* 28).

"My dearest Father,—It was too cloudy to do for aiguilles to-day, but I have been as busy as an ant, and have done a great

[1] W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, p. 118.

deal. But how fast the time does go. I have taken my place in diligence for Thursday, and hope to be with you in good time. But I quite feel as if I were leaving home to go on a journey. I shall not be melancholy however, for I have really had a good spell of it; and, this last week, I have tried to get enough of it to last me for some time to come; and I think I have. I had nearly a little too much yesterday. I don't know whether it was hot at Geneva, but I was on a high glacier where there was no wind, and the sun scorched me till I was forced to turn back, and to carry an umbrella besides whenever I had a hand free, to which I was never reduced even in Italy. I don't know anything more wonderful in the Alps than the feeling of this insufferable sunshine, with all the crevices in the snow about one filled with icicles. I am quite well, however. Dearest love to my mother. I don't intend to write again."

"As busy as an ant": that is a true description of Ruskin's life; and if it be the case that an ant's mode of progression is not always direct from point to point, of Ruskin also it is true that he took his arduous divagations.

With the summer tour of 1849 Ruskin's direct studies for *Modern Painters* were intermitted until 1854, though he was at Chamouni again for a few days later in 1849. In the winter of 1849–1850, he was at work in Venice; in 1850–1851 he was writing the first volume of *The Stones;* in 1851–1852 he was again at work in Venice; in 1852–1853 he was writing the second and third volumes of *The Stones*, and in 1853–1854 he was engaged in the miscellaneous occupations described in the Introduction to Vol. XII. The early summer of 1854 saw him setting out once more for Switzerland,[1] and the moment he was in sight of Calais—the port of entry to his Alpine paradise, the studies for *Modern Painters* were resumed. It was on the steam-packet that he made the study of its jib which is reproduced in *Præterita;* noting, in his diary, the beauty of its curves; and this too was the last of his approaches to Calais before he wrote the "glorious thing"[2] on the old tower with which the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*

[1] Ruskin's itinerary on this tour was as follows: Calais (May 10), Amiens (May 11), Beauvais (May 13), Gisors (May 16), Chartres (May 24), Champagnole (June 2), Geneva (June 4), Vevay through the Simmenthal to Thun (June 18), Interlachen (June 20), Thun (June 24), Lucerne (July 2), St. Martin's (July 9), Chamouni (July 10), St. Martin's (July 26), Geneva (July 28), Chamouni (August 15), Sion (September 5), Martigny (September 12), Champagnole (September 17), Paris (September 28), Dover (October 2). At some point in the earlier part of the tour Ruskin was at the Swiss Fribourg, but there is no entry in the diary fixing the date.

[2] *D. G. Rossetti's Letters to William Allingham*, p. 181.

opens. On the road from Calais to Amiens he notes the beauty of the tree-scenery, and this also was the foundation of a passage in the third volume.[1] A passage from his diary at Amiens, describing a walk "among the branching currents of the Somme," was given in the fourth volume.[2] Then he revisited some of his favourite cathedrals, afterwards making his way, by Champagnole, as always, to Geneva. At Vevay they stopped some days, and here he was already at work on *Modern Painters*. "I am writing," he says in the first chapter of the third volume, "at a window which commands a view of the head of the Lake of Geneva,"[3] and it was there that he penned his definition of poetry[4] and his analysis of "the grand style." From Vevay he proceeded through the Simmenthal to Thun, and on the journey wrote the pamphlet on the Opening of the Crystal Palace (see Vol. XII. p. 417). The Simmenthal and the country about Fribourg inspired a passage in the fourth volume.[5] Beautiful in itself, it exerts, he says, an added charm as containing "far-away promise" of scenery yet greater and more impressive, and is thus peculiarly calculated to excite "the expectant imagination." Something of the same idea was expressed by a later poet in describing the same scenery:—

> "Far off the old snows ever new
> With silver edges cleft the blue
> Aloft, alone, divine;
> The sunny meadows silent slept,
> Silence the sombre armies kept,
> The vanguard of the pine."[6]

At Fribourg he spent some time in sketching its walls and towers, for one of his purposes on this foreign tour was to study Swiss history, and in connexion therewith "to engrave a series of drawings of the following Swiss towns: Geneva, Fribourg, Basle, Thun, Baden, and Schaffhausen."[7] This work was never completed, but many such drawings are made, some of which are reproduced in this edition. A drawing of the Towers of Fribourg made at this time is engraved as Plate 24 in the fourth volume. Next, Ruskin spent two or three weeks in the Bernese Oberland, and at Lucerne. Some sketches at Lucerne were utilised to

[1] See the extract from his diary quoted in a note below.
[2] See ch. i. § 12 *n*.
[3] See the Plate opposite.
[4] See *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 10.
[5] Ch. xi. §§ 8–10.
[6] F. W. H. Myers: "Simmenthal."
[7] *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. §§ 10, 12.

J. Ruskin

Allen & Co Sc.

The Head of the Lake of Geneva

From the drawing in the possession of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.

illustrate "The Law of Evanescence" in the fourth volume.[1] A drawing of the valley of Lauterbrunnen is here given (Plate H); he notes his observations in that valley in the fourth volume (ch. xii. § 18). His diary at this time shows once more the spirit of religious solemnity in which he approached his task. He was "Nature's Priest," appointed by a direct call to testify to the Divinity of Nature and of Truth; a steward of the mysteries, bound in duty and in gratitude to reveal the holiness and the beauty which he was privileged to see:—

> "*June* 24.—My father called me at half-past four this morning at Interlachen. I was out as the clock struck five, and climbed as steadily as I could among the woods north of the valley, for an hour and a half, then emerging on the pure green pasture of the upper mountains. The Jungfrau and two Eigers were clear and soft in the intense mountain light; a field of silver cloud filled the valley above the lake of Brienz; the eastern hills fused in mist, splendid in the white warmth of morning. I stood long, praying that these happy hours and holy sights might be of more use to me than they have been, and might be remembered by me in hours of temptation or mortification." [2]
>
> "Lucerne, *July* 2, 1854.—Third Sunday after Trinity. I hope to keep this day a festival for ever, having received my third call from God,[3] in answer to much distressful prayer. May He give grace, to walk hereafter with Him in newness of life, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

In the same spirit is his first entry on finding himself once more in his happy valley:—

> "Chamouni, *July* 10.—Thank God, here once more, and feeling it more deeply than ever. I have been up to my stone upon the Breven,[4] all unchanged and happy. It is curious that the first book I took up here, after my New Testament, was the *Christian Year*, and it opened at the poem for the 20th Sunday after Trinity, which I had never read before."
>
> "18*th July*.—Every day here I seem to see further into nature, and into myself—and into futurity."

[1] Plate 26, illustrating ch. v., "Of Turnerian Mystery."

[2] The reader will recall Ruskin's saying in the Epilogue to vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 350), that he "never climbed any mountain, alone, without kneeling down, by instinct, on its summit to pray."

[3] For Ruskin's first call, see probably Vol. IV. p. 348 (Lucca, 1845); for his second (at Venice in 1852), Vol. X. p. xxxix.

[4] For his description of this "mossy rock beside the fountain of the Brevent," see Vol. IV. p. 363.

The reader will remember the poem which harmonises so perfectly with Ruskin's mood and mission:—

> "Where is Thy favour'd haunt, eternal Voice,
> The region of thy choice,
> Where, undisturb'd by sin and earth, the soul
> Owns Thine entire control?—
> 'Tis on the mountain's summit dark and high,
> When storms are hurrying by:
> 'Tis mid the strong foundations of the earth,
> Where torrents have their birth."

It was amid such scenes—and "such sounds as make deep silence in the heart, For Thought to do her part"—that, during a busy and happy fortnight at Chamouni, Ruskin revived the impressions and completed the studies which informed the greater portion of his fourth volume. It was during this visit to Chamouni that he made, in particular, the experiments in light which are explained in its third chapter. His diary shows also that he was very busy in collecting and studying the Alpine flowers. It is significant of the mood in which these studies were made that the portions of the Bible now selected for his daily annotation were the Beatitudes and the Revelation.

Another entry in the diary shows the peace and health which he found in these pursuits:—

> "Sallenches, *13th August.*—How little I thought God would bring me here again just now; and I am here, stronger in health, higher in hope, deeper in peace, than I have been for years. The green pastures and pine forests of the Varens softly seen through the light of my window. I cannot be thankful enough, nor happy enough. Psalm lxvi. 8–20."

From the "Mountain Glory" Ruskin passed to the "Mountain Gloom." It was at Sion, as appears from a long entry in his diary for September 5, 1854, that he made the notes afterwards expanded in the nineteenth chapter of the fourth volume (§§ 31–33). But his impressions of the Rhone valley were not all of gloom. Here is an impression of a morning effect (Martigny, September 12):—

> "Remember effect of tufted valley of Rhone, seen in the morning from Martigny; an infinite space of rounded spots [sketch] dying away into inconceivable faintness of bloomy distance—the Gemmi and the Alps gleaming pure in the distant dawn, and soft dark outlines of side hills coming nearer and nearer, relieved against intense silver flakes of

J Ruskin

Allen & Co 3c

Fribourg, Switzerland

horizontal cloud. I cannot find words to express the grandeur and delicacy united of the great dying blue space of wooded plain, and the white mist that absorbed it—and the noble crested castle, half-way between Martigny and Sion on the left."

He was now on his way home, and after spending a day or two in Paris to make some further studies in the Louvre,[1] reached Dover on October 2. The contrast between the primness of England and the picturesqueness of the Continent struck him once more very strongly :—

"Dover, *2nd October, Monday*.—Dover to Canterbury, and very happy—a heavenly day of warm sunshine. It is impossible to describe the singular effect of the minuteness of the English town after the Continent, especially Chamouni and the Valais. The Doll's-house look of the principal street almost ridiculous; the peculiar red-bricked, smooth-shaven, yet old-fashioned simplicity of smallness; the perfection of establishment on a scale of six feet wide by fifteen high—the entirely organized houses—parlour, kitchen, and all (with knockers and bells, as if people were to be summoned from the other end of the world), and roof with garret windows in it; and a bow, perhaps, in the second story, and all so minute that three such houses would go into the space of one of the cottages of Unterseen as opposite [reference to a sketch]. All so neat and homely and happy, and yet so utterly vulgar—such an air of ale and tobacco and sanded floors about it all (first-rate ale, and sweet tobacco in pipes—no segars). And tea and pleasant homely talk, moral and narrow, to the uttermost. One cannot conceive anybody living in Canterbury to have any ideas of advance, or change, or anything in the world out of Canterbury."

"Reading, *October* 11.—There is one thing very noticeable in England as compared with France. In France one never sees such an inscription as 'To let, a Genteel house up this road.' There is no gentility in France. One sees 'Une belle maison,' 'Une jolie chambre commode,' 'propre,' but never anything corresponding to our 'genteel.' I think they try to rise in France; but not to appear to have risen. They have ambition, not pretension. Neither is there anything, in the small cottage dwellings, of nomenclature such as with us—'Balmoral Cottage,' 'Saxe-Coburg'—Villas, etc., to places ten feet square. The French have a gloomy dignity quite beyond this—a self-assertion probably in truth founded on a greater pride and selfishness. There was sympathy with, and regard for, the Queen, as well as conceit of himself, in the man who named his cottage 'Balmoral.'"

[1] Printed in Vol. XII. pp. 471–473.

And so forth; the reader will already have recognised here the notes for the opening passage in the fourth volume.

It will thus be seen that by the time Ruskin reached home at the beginning of October 1854, his mind, his note-books, and his sketch-books were well filled with materials for the forthcoming volumes of *Modern Painters;* but he had a long row to hoe before those materials could be planted in their proper places, and everything fitted into a connected scheme. He had made a beginning on the work in Scotland in 1853. He writes to his father on November 23, in that year, that he had "really and truly *begun*" the first chapter; but it was not till a year later that he made much way. The work of writing the third and fourth volumes took him from fifteen to eighteen months—by no means a long time considering their bulk, and the care with which he always composed, and the fifty plates with which the volumes were illustrated. But now, as always, he had many other interests and some diversions.

Ruskin was never entirely a recluse or a student. He wanted to do, as well as to write. He would have agreed with that fine saying by Edward Fitzgerald on the beauty of good action—"even as a matter of Art"—out of which Tennyson made his poem "Romney's Remorse"; and Ruskin himself felt increasingly the desire to supplement writing by personal effort. "One may do more with a man," he says, "by getting ten words spoken with him face to face, than by the black lettering of a whole life's thought."[1] We have seen how the æsthetic and the moral sides of his nature were already beginning to be at strife,[2] and how, too, his studies among books and in nature were coming to be mingled with urgent thoughts of political and personal benevolence. He could not thus be entirely satisfied with quiet work in his study at Denmark Hill; he wanted his actions, as well as his written words, to advance the Kingdom. One scope for practical work he found, as already related, in lectures and classes to artisans at the Architectural Museum; another, and a more continuously absorbing, in the Working Men's College. The College was one of many institutions which owe their origin to the co-operative movement, promoted by a small group of men inspired by the leadership of Frederick Denison Maurice. "There was then, it must be remembered, no means by which a working man or a poor man could get, in a systematic way, any education going beyond the bare elements of knowledge."[3] School Boards had not been heard of. The churches and chapels did

[1] *Fors Clavigera,* Letter 17.
[2] Vol. XII. p. lxix.
[3] R. B. Litchfield : *The Beginnings of the Working Men's College.*

much for elementary education, but their efforts touched only a fraction of the people. The masses were agitating for political rights, but they were as yet ill-equipped for their exercise. "Mechanics' Institutes" had existed for some years, but, said Dickens, "I have never seen with these eyes of mine a mechanic in any recognised position on the platform of a Mechanics' Institute." Here and there, too, Evening Classes had been established, but they aimed at nothing higher than the three R's. The Working Men's College was a pioneer in a different kind of work. It aimed at bringing within the reach of the working-classes the same *kind* of education that the upper classes enjoyed. It saw in education a means of life, as well as of livelihood. It sought not to help working-men to "get on" and "rise out of their class," but to improve themselves by satisfying the needs of their mental and spiritual natures. It was to provide, too, something more than lectures; it was to give teaching and also personal contact between the teacher and the taught. All this sounds like a commonplace to-day, but at the time it was new and revolutionary. It precisely fitted in with the ideas at which Ruskin had been arriving, and it was his chapter "On the Nature of Gothic" that was distributed, as we have seen, as a sort of manifesto at the opening of the College on October 31, 1854. Its habitat was then, and until 1857, at No. 31 Red Lion Square; Maurice himself lived close by in Queen Square. Dr. Furnivall had sent Ruskin a copy of the circulars about the College; Ruskin's sympathy went out to the scheme at once, and he wrote to Maurice offering to take charge of the art-teaching. "His volunteered adhesion," writes an historian of the College, "was of immense service. It not only gave a splendid start to the Art teaching, but helped the enterprise as a whole by letting the world know that one of the greatest Englishmen of the time was in active sympathy with it. It was through him that not long afterwards we had the help in the Art School of Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown, and other artists. Mr. Lowes Dickinson, who continued to teach for some sixteen years, was one of our original founders."[1] Of Ruskin's teaching at the College we shall often hear in later volumes, and especially in that containing his correspondence with D. G. Rossetti, Mr. William Ward, and others; but some general account must here be given, as the work occupied a considerable part of his time and thoughts during the years in which he was writing the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*.

[1] R. B. Litchfield. The first announcement of the classes contained this item :—

"Thursday, 7-9 . . . Drawing . . . Mr. Ruskin."

At first Ruskin, Rossetti, and Mr. Lowes Dickinson worked together every Thursday evening. "There is no fear about teaching," wrote Ruskin to Rossetti in enlisting his services; "all that the men want is to *see* a few touches done, and to be told where and why they are wrong in their work, in the simplest possible way."[1] In the Easter term, 1855, the class was subdivided; Rossetti teaching the figure, Ruskin and Mr. Dickinson taking the elementary and landscape class, which in turn was afterwards subdivided, Ruskin taking a class by himself. "There were four terms," Mr. Collingwood explains, "in the Working Men's College year; the only vacation, except for the fortnight at Christmas, being from the beginning of August to the end of October. Mr. Ruskin did not always attend throughout the Summer term, though sometimes his class came down to him into the country to sketch.[2] He kept up the work without other intermission until May 1858. . . . In the spring of 1860, he was back at his old post for a term; but after that he discontinued regular attendance, and went to the Working Men's College only at intervals, to give addresses or informal lectures to students and friends."[3] It will thus be seen that Ruskin's help to the Working Men's College was much more than a spasm of sympathy or an indulgence in the presently fashionable occupation of "East-ending."

To the man who came within range of him there, his teaching was a revelation and an inspiration. He never did anything by halves. Whatever he had, he shared; and he threw into his classes all the wealth of his enthusiasm. Among his first pupils was Mr. George Allen, who now contributes the following reminiscences:—

"My first meeting with Mr. Ruskin was in the Art class-room at Red Lion Square in 1854, shortly after the College was opened. At first Mr. Ruskin only spoke to me as a student, in turn with the others—he used to

[1] *Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 52.

[2] The following letter refers to these sketching-parties:—

"Denmark Hill, *September 9th*, 1855.

"Dear Furnivall,—How long it is since we have seen each other! I think you would like to come out with one of my sketching-parties. I am only going to have two more, the next, *D.V.*, on Saturday next. Cabs at Camberwell Green, at half-past three. Tea at the Greyhound Inn, Dulwich, at seven. Come early or late as you find convenient, if you can come at all. At all events I hope to see you soon.

"Ever affectionately yours,
"J. Ruskin."

(*Letters from John Ruskin to F. J. Furnivall; privately printed*, 1897, p. 58.)

[3] *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, p. 153.

come round to each one to correct their drawings. Some time during the early part of 1856 I made a copy in sepia of the Mildmay sea-piece (one of the *Liber Studiorum*) which pleased Mr. Ruskin greatly, and his father —by way of encouragement to me—afterwards bought the copy. Later on, I became Mr. Ruskin's assistant drawing-master in connexion with the classes. This was a year or two before I joined him definitely as his own assistant.

"Mr. Ruskin did not confine his work with the men to mere teaching. He gave the easels for them to work at, and from time to time furnished them with examples for drawing—always trying their powers at first with a round plaster ball pendent from a string, then going on to plaster casts of natural leaves (all of which were paid for by him). Also, he frequently brought drawings by various artists, belonging to him, for the purpose of showing how certain effects were got, *e.g.*, the rounding of a pear by William Hunt. (This drawing was eventually spoilt by being exposed to the fumes of the gas in the class-room.) Mr. Ruskin was always pleased to bring anything associated with any work of his in progress, if he thought it would interest the men. I remember, one evening, his showing proofs of 'The Lombard Apennine' and 'St. George of the Seaweed,' then just engraved by Thomas Lupton for vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*. Another time, when he wanted the men, for a change of subject, to draw cordage, he sent me down to a shipbreaker's at Rotherhithe to buy some old ships' hempen cable.

"Mr. Ruskin was always ready to encourage those of the students who showed some talent, but always discouraged them from working there with a view of becoming artists, and was severe on any kind of conceit. On one occasion a new student—who fancied himself and a drawing of foliage (very badly done) which he had brought for Mr. Ruskin to see—had placed this where it should catch Mr. Ruskin's eye on entering the room. Not content with this, he laid hold of Mr. Ruskin's arm, observing, 'Does it not have a beautiful effect from here, sir?' to which Mr. Ruskin simply replied 'Not to my mind,' and passed on."

Another pupil, from the first, was the late Mr. Thomas Sulman;[1] he too has recorded his grateful memories:—

"Never without an afterglow of grateful memory will the first art-class of the Working Men's College be remembered by those few living who were privileged to belong to it. . . . It was a foggy November night when three friends presented themselves at the dingy old rooms in Red Lion Square. One of the three was the late too little known artist and thinker, James Smetham.[2] We sat upon a school bench and matriculated. The

[1] An engraver; he cut the woodblocks for Augustus Hare's works.
[2] Compare Vol. III. p. 231 *n.*, and Vol. IV. p. xlvii. *n.*

examination was not rigorous. We read a paragraph from a newspaper, wrote a few sentences from dictation, and worked a short division sum. But simple as it was, Smetham, who read Horace and Aristotle in the original, broke down three times in the arithmetic. We then went up to the studio. On the third floor two small rooms had been broken into one; they were so closely packed with easels as to deny elbow-room. Our master had most generously provided materials and copies. We began to work. I cannot hope to describe the delights of those evenings. He taught each of us separately, studying the capacities of each student. . . . For one pupil he would put a cairngorm pebble or fluor-spar into a tumbler of water, and set him to trace their tangled veins of crimson and amethyst. For another he would bring lichen and fungi from Anerley Woods. Once, to fill us with despair of colour, he bought a case of West Indian birds unstuffed, as the collector had stored them, all rubies and emeralds. Sometimes it was a fifteenth-century [more probably, thirteenth-century] Gothic missal, when he set us counting the order of the coloured leaves in each spray of the MS. At other times it was a splendid Albert Dürer woodcut, that we might copy a square inch or two of herbage, and identify the columbines and cyclamens. He talked much to the class, discursively but radiantly. . . .

"The pole-star of his artistic heaven was Turner. One by one, he brought for us to examine his marvels of water-colour art from Denmark Hill. He would point out the subtleties and felicities in their composition, analysing on a blackboard their line schemes. Sometimes he would make us copy minute portions of a 'Liber,' some line of footsteps or the handle of a plough. . . . How generous he was! He had reams of the best stout drawing-paper made specially for us, supplying every convenience the little rooms would hold. He commissioned William Hunt of the Old Water-Colour Society to paint two subjects for the class, and both were masterpieces. One was a golden, metallic, dried herring and some open mussel-shells; and the other, some eggs and yellow onions; to show how brilliant the humblest subjects might become in a master's hands. He used to say, if you gave one man the pigments of every tint of the rainbow, he would paint you a dull picture; but give another a little whitening, or a little slate and brick-dust, and he will produce a brilliant and harmonious one. . . . His face would light up when he saw a piece of honest or delicate work; it was, perhaps, his greatest fault as a teacher that he was sometimes too lavish of his praise. . . . Ruskin never knew himself how much he did for many of us. It is not too much to say that the whole of our following lives have been enriched by these hours we spent with him."[1]

[1] "A Memorable Art Class," in *Good Words* for August 1897. The same article contains interesting reminiscences of Rossetti. Some reminiscences by Mr. E. Cooke of Ruskin's teaching at the College are given in Mr. Collingwood's *Life*, p. 153.

It was "a memorable art class," indeed, in which the students were thus privileged to sit at the feet of Ruskin, Rossetti, and Burne-Jones.

To the National Gallery Site Commission in 1857—in the course of evidence reprinted in Vol. XIII.—Ruskin described his object in thus teaching at the Working Men's College. "My efforts are directed," he said, "not to making a carpenter an artist, but to making him happier as a carpenter." But the native bent was sometimes too strong to be denied, while on the other hand, Ruskin's encouragement may in other cases have led a man to over-rate his powers, or to abuse his master's generosity. The record of his classes is, however, a worthy one. "George Allen as a mezzotint engraver, Arthur Burgess as a draughtsman and wood-cutter, John Bunney as a painter of architectural detail, W. Jeffrey as an artistic photographer, E. Cooke as a teacher, William Ward as a facsimile copyist, have all done work whose value deserves acknowledgment, all the more because it was not aimed at popular effect."[1]

Ruskin's weekly class at the Working Men's College, with the incidental correspondence and good offices on his part which it entailed, did not exhaust his unselfish activities at this time. He had conceived a great admiration for Rossetti's genius, as well as a warm affection for him personally. As he had befriended Millais and Holman Hunt, so now he devoted himself to assisting Rossetti. He had already done the painter a useful service by commending his work to M'Cracken,[2] who thereupon bought the water-colour (now at Oxford) of "Dante drawing an angel in memory of Beatrice." This led to Ruskin's personal acquaintance with Rossetti, as appears from a letter of the latter to Madox Brown, dated April 14, 1854:—

> "M'Cracken of course sent my drawing to Ruskin, who the other day wrote me an incredible letter about it, remaining mine respectfully (! !), and wanting to call. I of course stroked him down in my answer, and yesterday he called. His manner was more agreeable than I had always expected. . . . He seems in a mood to make my fortune."[3]

Immediately after this, Ruskin went abroad; there was correspondence between him and Rossetti, as will be seen in a later volume; on

[1] W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, p. 155.

[2] See Vol. IV. p. 38 *n.*

[3] *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: his Family Letters, with a Memoir*, by William Michael Rossetti, 1895, i. 180. In a later letter to Brown, Rossetti wrote (May 13, 1854): "Millais has written to me that Gambart wants me to paint something, so I imagine Ruskin is beginning to bear fruit" (*Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 9).

his return, he set about, if not making Rossetti's fortune, at any rate relieving him from financial anxiety. "He undertook to buy," says Mr. W. M. Rossetti, "if he happened to like it, whatever Rossetti produced, at a range of prices, such as the latter would have asked from any other purchaser, and up to a certain maximum of expenditure on his own part. If he did not relish a work, Rossetti could offer it to any one else. I cannot imagine any arrangement more convenient to my brother, who thus secured a safe market for his performances, and could even rely upon not being teazed to do on the nail, work for which he received payment in whole or in part."[1] Ruskin's considerate generosity did not end there. Rossetti was at this time engaged to Miss Siddal, called familiarly "Guggum" by him and his circle, and "Ida" by Ruskin, who took the name no doubt from Tennyson's *Princess*. She had been down to spend a day with Ruskin and his parents at Denmark Hill. "All the Ruskins," wrote Rossetti to Madox Brown (April 13, 1855), "were most delighted with Guggum. John Ruskin said she was a noble, glorious creature, and his father said, by her look and manner, she might have been a Countess." Miss Siddal also was a designer, and Ruskin was greatly struck with her talent. He arranged to settle on her an annual sum of £150, "taking in exchange her various works up to that value and retaining them, or (if preferred) selling some of them, and handing over to her any extra proceeds."[2] In a later volume, Ruskin's letters to Rossetti and Miss Siddal are collected, but one of the earliest of the series must here be given for its autobiographical interest. It is undated, but must have been written late in 1854 or early in 1855:—

> "Dear Rossetti,—I daresay you do not quite like to answer my somewhat blunt question in my last letter; I was somewhat too brief in putting it; I was unwell, and could not write at length. My motive in asking you was simply that I did not know how best to act for you, and what to propose about sending Miss S[iddal] to Wales or Jersey, or anywhere else that might not in some way be disagreeable to you; and also because I thought that the whole thing might perhaps be much better managed in another way, and your own powers of art more healthily developed, and your own life made happier.
>
> "I daresay our letters may now cross; but it does not matter,

[1] *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, i. 181.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 184.

for, whatever may be the contents of yours, I am sure there will be one feeling apparent in it, and that will be a dislike of putting yourself under obligation to any one in carrying out any main purpose of your life.

"I think it well, therefore, to tell you something about myself, and what you really ought to feel about me in this matter.

"You constantly hear a great many people saying I am very bad, and perhaps you have been yourself disposed lately to think me very good. I am neither the one nor the other. I am very self-indulgent, very proud, very obstinate, and *very* resentful; on the other side, I am very upright—nearly as just as I suppose it is possible for man to be in this world—exceedingly fond of making people happy, and devotedly reverent to all true mental or moral power. I never betrayed a trust—never wilfully did an unkind thing—and never, in little or large matters, depreciated another that I might raise myself. I believe I once had affections as warm as most people; but partly from evil chance, and partly from foolish misplacing of them, they have got tumbled down and broken to pieces. It is a very great, in the long-run the greatest, misfortune of my life that, on the whole, my relations, cousins and so forth, are persons with whom I can have no sympathy, and that circumstances have always somehow or another kept me out of the way of the people of whom I could have made friends. So that I have no friendships, and no loves.

"Now you know the best and worst of me; and you may rely upon it it is the truth. If you hear people say I am utterly hard and cold, depend upon it it is untrue. Though I have no friendships and no loves, I cannot read the epitaph of the Spartans at Thermopylæ with a steady voice to the end; and there is an old glove in one of my drawers that has lain there these eighteen years, which is worth something to me yet. If, on the other hand, you ever feel disposed to think me particularly good, you will be just as wrong as most people are on the other side. My pleasures are in seeing, thinking, reading, and making people happy (if I can, consistently with my own comfort). And I *take* these pleasures. And I suppose, if my pleasures were in smoking, betting, dicing, and giving pain, I should take *those* pleasures. It seems to me that one man is made one way, and one another—the measure of effort and self-denial can never be known, except by each conscience to itself. Mine is small enough.

"But, besides taking pleasure thus where I happen to find it, I have a theory of life which it seems to me impossible as a rational being to be altogether without—namely, that we are all sent into the world to be of such use to each other as we can, and also that

my particular use is likely to be in the things that I know something about—that is to say, in matters connected with painting.

"Thus then it stands. It seems to me that, amongst all the painters I know, you on the whole have the greatest genius, and you appear to me also to be—as far as I can make out—a very good sort of person. I see that you are unhappy, and that you can't bring out your genius as you should. It seems to me then the proper and *necessary* thing, if I can, to make you more happy, and that I should be more really useful in enabling you to paint properly and keep your room in order than in any other way.

"If it were necessary for me to deny myself, or to make any mighty exertion to do this, of course it might to you be a subject of gratitude, or a question if you should accept it or not. But, as I don't happen to have any other objects in life, and as I have a comfortable room and all I want in it (and more), it seems to me just as natural I should try to be of use to you as that I should offer you a cup of tea if I saw you were thirsty, and there was plenty in the teapot, and I had got all I wanted.

"I am not going to make you any offer till you tell me, if you are willing to do so, what your wishes and circumstances really are. What I meant was to ask if an agreement to paint for me regularly, up to a certain value, would put you more at your ease; but I will not enter into more particulars at present, for I hardly know, till I have settled some business with my father, what my circumstances really are. It provokingly happens that, although I have three times as much as is really necessary to enable me to carry out my[1] purposes, I have all this winter been launching out in a very heedless way, buying missals and Albert Dürers—not expecting any call upon me—so that it may be a month or two yet before I can send you what I should like; but after that all will go on quite smoothly. Meantime I hope this letter will put you more at your ease, and that you will believe me

"Always affectionately yours,

"J. Ruskin.

"One thing, by-the-bye, I hope you will not permit even for a moment to slide into your head. That anything I am doing for workmen, or for anybody, is in any wise an endeavour to *regain* position in public opinion. I *am* what I always was; I am doing what I always proposed to do, and what I have been hindered by untoward circumstances from doing hitherto; and the only temptation which is brought upon me by calumny is, not to fawn for

[1] Printed "any" hitherto.

public favour, but to give up trying to do the public any good, and enjoy myself misanthropically.

"I forgot to say also that I really do *covet* your drawings as much as I covet Turner's; only it is useless self-indulgence to buy Turner's, and useful self-indulgence to buy yours. Only I won't have them after they have been more than nine times rubbed entirely out, remember that." [1]

Ruskin was also, it may be added, a great admirer of Rossetti's poetry, and paid for the publication of his translations from *Early Italian Poets*. Their friendship continued for some years, but gradually cooled: the part of disciple was not one which Rossetti was fitted to play, even to a master so delicate in his patronage as Ruskin.

Another young artist whose acquaintance Ruskin made at this time, was Frederic Leighton. In 1855 Ruskin issued the first of an annual series of *Notes on some of the Principal Pictures exhibited in the Rooms of the Royal Academy* (see Vol. XIV.). By this time his repute as a critic stood almost at its highest point; friends, and even amateurs personally unknown to him, were in the habit of seeking his opinion and advice on the pictures of the year; and he began the publication of these *Notes* as a sort of open "circular letter." Among the pictures of 1855 was Leighton's "Cimabue's Madonna carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence." Ruskin was greatly struck by it and praised it warmly in the *Notes*, and the picture was bought by Queen Victoria. The painter was at this time little known in art circles in London, for he studied and worked abroad. He had become acquainted with Robert Browning, and the poet asked leave to bring his young friend to Denmark Hill. "We spent an evening with Mr. Ruskin," wrote Mrs. Browning to a friend, "who was gracious and generous, and strengthened all my good impressions. Robert took our young friend Leighton to see him afterwards, and was as kindly received." [2] Leighton's art was to develop along lines with which, in some respects, Ruskin had imperfect sympathy, but in later years he paid graceful compliments to the President's gifts and achievements.[3]

Browning's intercourse with Ruskin at this period may not have been without effect on the studies in poetry, which were to occupy some space in the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*. In the latter volume Ruskin refers to the poet's "unerring" insight into the mind of the Middle Ages, and notices his "seemingly careless and

[1] Reprinted from *Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism*, pp. 70–76.
[2] *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, vol. ii. p. 210.
[3] *The Art of England*, Lecture iii.

too rugged lines." In 1855 Browning had published his *Men and Women*, which found an appreciative reader in Ruskin. The poet writes to Rossetti of having received "a dear, too dear, and good letter from Mr. Ruskin."[1] But Ruskin had confessed his occasional bewilderment, and in particular had criticised, it seems, the poem entitled "Popularity," and beginning "Stand still, true poet that you are!" The substance of Ruskin's criticism can be gathered from Browning's reply:—

"We don't read poetry by the same way, by the same law; it is too clear. I cannot begin writing poetry till my imaginary reader has conceded licences to me which you demur at altogether. . . . You ought, I think, to keep pace with the thought tripping from ledge to ledge of my 'glaciers,' as you call them; not stand poking your alpenstock into the holes, and demonstrating that no foot could have stood there;—suppose it sprang over there? . . . Why, you look at my little song as if it were Hobbs' or Nobbs' lease of his house, a testament of his devising, wherein, I grant you, not a 'then and there,' 'to him and his heirs,' 'to have and to hold,' and so on, would be superfluous; and so you begin: 'Stand still,—why?' For the reason indicated in the verse, to be sure,—*to let me draw him.* . . . The last charge I cannot answer, for you may be right in preferring it, however unwitting I am of the fact. I *may* put Robert Browning into Pippa and other men and maids. If so, *peccavi;* but I don't see myself in them, at all events.

"Do you think poetry was ever generally understood—or can be? Is the business of it to tell people what they know already, as they know it, and so precisely that they shall be able to cry out—'Here you should supply *this—that,* you evidently pass over, and I'll help you from my own stock?' It is all teaching, on the contrary, and the people hate to be taught. They say otherwise,—make foolish fables about Orpheus enchanting stocks and stones, poets standing up and being worshipped, — all nonsense and impossible dreaming. A poet's affair is with God,—to whom he is accountable, and of whom is his reward; look elsewhere, and you find misery enough. Do you believe people understand *Hamlet?* . . ."[2]

It may be recalled that Ruskin, in an early letter, makes on his own behalf much of the same defence as is here adduced by Browning, and in later essays he often refers to the enigmatic character of the greatest poets.[3]

"We went to Denmark Hill yesterday," wrote Mrs. Browning of

[1] *Letters from Robert Browning to Various Correspondents.* Edited by Thomas J. Wise. Privately printed, 1895, vol. i. p. 21.

[2] The whole letter is printed by Mr. Collingwood in his *Life of Ruskin,* pp. 163–167. See also Vol. I. p. 444 *n.*

[3] See Vol. I. pp. 443, 444, and the references given in the note there.

an earlier visit (September 1852), "to have luncheon with the Ruskins, and see the Turners, which, by the way, are divine. I like Mr. Ruskin much, and so does Robert. Very gentle, yet earnest,—refined and truthful. We count him among the valuable acquaintances made this year in England."[1] Another poet whose personal acquaintance Ruskin made at this time was Tennyson, who also desired to see the famous collection at Denmark Hill. Kingsley also was among his visitors (see p. 429). The following is Ruskin's letter of invitation to Tennyson:—

"Denmark Hill, Camberwell,
21*st March*, 1855.

"Dear Mr. Tennyson,—I venture to write to you, because as I was talking about you with Mr. Woolner yesterday, he gave me more pleasure than I can express by telling me that you wished to see my Turners.

"By several untoward chances I have been too long hindered from telling you face to face how much I owe you. So you see at last I seize the wheel of fortune by its nearest spoke, begging you, with the heartiest entreaty I can, to tell me when you are likely to be in London, and to fix a day if possible that I may keep it wholly for you, and prepare my Turners to look their rosiest and best. Capricious they are as enchanted opals, but they must surely shine for you.

"Any day will do for me if you give me notice two or three days before; but please come soon, for I have much to say to you, and am eager to say it, above all to tell you how for a thousand things I am gratefully and respectfully yours,

"J. Ruskin."[2]

Of Ruskin's charm on occasions such as these, no better account has been written than that by James Smetham. He was, as we have seen, a pupil at the Working Men's College, and was asked to dine at Denmark Hill. He describes the visit in a letter to a friend:—

"*5th February*, 1855.

"I walked there through the wintry weather and got in about dusk. One or two gossiping details will interest you before I give you what I care for; and so I will tell you that he has a large house with a lodge, and a valet and a footman and coachman, and grand rooms glittering with pictures, chiefly Turner's, and that his father and mother live with him, or he with them. . . .

"His father is a fine old gentleman, who has a lot of bushy grey hair, and eyebrows sticking up all rough and knowing, with a comfortable

[1] *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, vol. ii. p. 87.
[2] *Alfred Lord Tennyson: a Memoir*, by his Son, 1897, vol. i. p. 383.

way of coming up to you with his hands in his pockets, and making *you* comfortable, and saying, in answer to your remark, that 'John's' prose works are pretty good. His mother is a ruddy, dignified, richly-dressed old gentlewoman of seventy-five, who knows Chamouni better than Camberwell: evidently a *good* old lady, with the *Christian Treasury* tossing about on the table.

"She puts 'John' down and holds her own opinions, and flatly contradicts him; and he receives all her opinions with a soft reverence and gentleness that is pleasant to witness.

"The old gentleman amused me twice during the evening by standing over me and enlightening me on the subject of my own merits, with the air of a man who thought that I had not the remotest conception of my own abilities, and had therefore come to 'threap me down about them.' . . .

"The old lady was as quaintly kind. 'Has John showed this?' 'Has he showed you the other?' 'John, fetch Couttet's for Mr. Smetham to see:' and to all her sudden injunctions he replied by waiting on me in a way to make one ashamed. 'You must come in the daylight, John has heaps of things to show you, and—can you get away when you please?' etc. As these are in reality traits in 'John's' character, I have given you them at length. I wish I could reproduce a good impression of John for you, to give you the notion of his 'perfect gentleness and lowlihood.'

"He certainly bursts out with a remark, and in a contradictious way, but only because he believes it, with no air of dogmatism or conceit. He is different at home from that which he is in a lecture before a mixed audience, and there is a spiritual sweetness in the half-timid expression of his eyes, and in bowing to you, as in taking wine, with (if I heard aright) 'I drink to thee,' he had a look that has followed me, a look bordering on tearful.

"He spent some time in this way. Unhanging a Turner from the wall of a distant room, he brought it to the table and put it into my hands; then we talked; then he went up into his study to fetch down some illustrative print or drawing; in one case, a literal view which he had travelled fifty miles to make, in order to compare with the picture. And so he kept on gliding all over the house, hanging and unhanging, and stopping a few minutes to talk. There would have been, if I had not seen from the first moment that he *knew* me well, something embarrassing in the chivalrous, hovering, way he had; as it was, I felt much otherwise, quite as free and open as with you in your little study. . . . I was in a sort of soft dream all the way home; nor has the fragrance, which, like the June sunset,

'Dwells in heaven half the night,'

left my spirit yet."[1]

[1] *Letters of James Smetham*, pp. 52–55.

J.Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc

The Walls of Lucerne

From the drawing in the possession of Pritchard Gordon. Esq.

What with entertaining friends and pupils, and writing his *Notes* on the exhibitions of the year, Ruskin found that *Modern Painters* was again getting into arrears. Rossetti towards the end of the summer suggested that they should take a holiday together; Ruskin could not spare the time:—

> "Dear Rossetti,—I am truly sorry to hear of your illness, and all your vexations. *Nothing* would give me more pleasure than to take a little holiday with you, and ramble about sketching and talking. You know I do not say this, or anything else, without meaning it. But this pleasure I must at present deny myself. I am deep in difficult chapters of *Modern Painters*. I cannot be disturbed even by my best friends or greatest pleasures. When I have to work out a chapter on a difficult subject, it is precisely the same to me as a mathematical calculation—to break into it is to throw it all down—back to the beginning. I do as much in dreamy and solitary lanes as I do at home. I could not have a companion.
>
> "I want you next year to take a little run to Switzerland. I will either go with you or meet you, if our times should not suit for starting. And then we will do some Alpine roses and other things which the World has no notion of. Will you come? . . ."

That expedition was never to be made, and Ruskin meanwhile continued at his task. The multifariousness of his interests—reflected in the very title of the third volume, "Of Many Things"—is well hit off in a letter of vivacity and humour to Mrs. Carlyle:—

> "Not that I have not been busy—and very busy, too. I have written, since May, good 600 pages, had them rewritten, cut up, corrected, and got fairly ready for press—and am going to press with the first of them on Gunpowder Plot Day; with a great hope of disturbing the Public Peace in various directions. Also, I have prepared above thirty drawings for engravers this year, retouched the engravings (generally the worst part of the business), and etched some on steel myself. In the course of the 600 pages I have had to make various remarks on German Metaphysics, on Poetry, Political Economy, Cookery, Music, Geology, Dress, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Navigation, all which subjects I have had to 'read up' accordingly, and this takes time. Moreover, I have had my class of workmen out sketching every week in the fields, during the summer; and have been studying Spanish proverbs with my father's partner, who came over from Spain to see the great Exhibition. I have also designed and drawn a window for the Museum

at Oxford; and have every now and then had to look over a parcel of five or six new designs for fronts and backs to the said Museum. During my above mentioned studies of Horticulture I became dissatisfied with the Linnæan, Jussieuan, and Everybody-elsian arrangement of plants, and have accordingly arranged a system of my own; and unbound my botanical book, and rebound it in brighter green, with all the pages through other, and backside foremost—so as to cut off the old paging numerals; and am now printing my new arrangement in a legible manner, on interleaved foolscap. I consider this arrangement one of my great achievements of the year. My studies of political economy have induced me to think also that nobody knows anything about that, and I am at present engaged in an investigation, on independent principles, of the Natures of Money, Rent, and Taxes, in an abstract form, which sometimes keeps me awake all night. My studies of German metaphysics have also induced me to think that the Germans don't know anything about *them;* and to engage in a serious inquiry into the meaning of Bunsen's great sentence in the beginning of the second volume of Hippolytus, about the Finite realization of the Infinity;[1] which has given me some trouble. The course of my studies of navigation necessitated my going to Deal to look at the Deal boats; and those of Geology to rearrange all my minerals (and wash a good many, which, I am sorry to say, I found wanted it). I have also several pupils, far and near, in the art of illumination, an American young lady to direct in the study of landscape painting, and a Yorkshire young lady to direct in the purchase of Turners[2]—and various little bye things besides.

"But I am coming to see you."[3]

The letter gives "a striking picture," as Professor Norton says, "of the astonishing activity of his intelligence, and the medley of his occupations." It is not surprising that his health was unequal to the strain, and we are now in a position to understand the entry in *Præterita*, referring to the year 1855:—

"I get cough which lasts for two months, till I go down to Tunbridge Wells, to my doctor cousin, William Richardson, who puts me to bed, gives me some syrup, cures me in three days, and calls me a fool for not coming to him before, with some rather angry

[1] See below, p. 424.

[2] Miss Heaton, of Leeds, with whom we shall meet in Ruskin's letters to Rossetti of this period; Ruskin encouraged her to buy Rossettis also.

[3] Printed by Professor Charles Eliot Norton in his Introduction to the American "Brantwood Edition" of *Aratra Pentelici*—"true not alone," he says, "of the year in which the letter was written [1855], but as well of year after year down as late as the time of these Oxford lectures."

warnings that I had better not keep a cough for two months again."[1]

This visit to Tunbridge Wells, and the other above spoken of to Deal, where he made the studies of ships, presently to be used in his Preface to *The Harbours of England*, were his only holidays in 1855; and thus was the third volume completed. It was published on January 15, 1856. A further spell of hard work during the winter of 1855–1856, disposed of the fourth volume, which appeared three months later, on April 14.

The structure of a book thus resumed after an interval of ten years —and ten years, be it remembered, which had seen the author pass almost from boyhood to manhood—naturally showed differences and developments. Naturally, too, the later part of the book was not at all what the author had intended. To begin with, the conclusion of the book was to have been one volume; it became three. An idea of Ruskin's earliest design may be gathered from a review of the second volume, by a friendly critic (probably Dr. Croly or W. H. Harrison): "This volume," he wrote, "is to be followed by a third, detailing the merits of the great schools of foreign painting. From so acute an observer who, though not an artist by profession, is obviously an artist by nature, we expect a highly valuable and intelligent work. It is proposed to give pictorial illustrations of the various styles, and it is to be hoped that it will be accompanied by the author's 'Tour.'"[2] There were many tours in it, as we have seen, and the scheme grew and grew, though even in 1853 Ruskin imagined that a single volume would suffice.[3] Again, in resuming his book, Ruskin adopted, as he here says (p. 18), a less systematic method. He discarded the elaborate synopsis of contents, and did not force his chapters into a rigidly consecutive scheme. He had begun, as he adds, to distrust systems and system-mongers. He had already expressed this feeling in his Review of Lord Lindsay (see Vol. XII. p. 175), and he presently dwelt upon it more fully.[4]

The fact is that though there is throughout *Modern Painters* an underlying unity of purpose and consistency of thought, yet if it is to be understood aright, it must be regarded as five different books, the division into which does not entirely correspond either with the division into volumes or with the framework mapped out at the

[1] *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 11.
[2] *Britannia*, June 6, 1846.
[3] See *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. ch. vi. § 62 (Vol. X. p. 229).
[4] See *A Joy for Ever*, § 128.

beginning of the book. (1) The First Volume is a defence of Turner, against the charge that his later pictures were "unnatural." This volume was, as Ruskin says,[1] the expansion of a magazine article, and was written in all the heat and haste of youthful enthusiasm. (2) Then came a pause, during which the author's principal study was among the early Italian painters and Tintoretto. Both alike commanded his passionate admiration. The Second Volume thus became in part a hymn of praise, inspired by the religious ideal of Giotto and his circle; and in part an essay upon the Imagination, inspired by Tintoret's works in the Scuola di San Rocco. (3) Ten years now intervened—years of widened and deepened study in many directions. The earlier chapters of the Third Volume are an interlude, necessary in order to establish a harmony between what had preceded and what was to follow. (4) The Fourth Volume and the first two Parts of the Fifth (vi. and vii., in the arrangement of the whole book) are an essay on the Beauty of Mountains, Trees, and Clouds; while, lastly, (5) the remainder of that final volume, written four years later,[2] is a treatise on "the relations of Art to God and man."

We are first concerned here with what we have called the interlude. In looking back over his first two volumes, and forward to what he had yet to say, Ruskin was struck with obvious difficulties and apparent contradictions. He had started with defining the greatest art as that which contained the greatest ideas; he had thus insisted on the spiritual side of art. Then he had turned to his defence of Turner; and there, owing to the nature of the attacks he had to meet, his principal object was to prove that Turner had given more material and actual truth than other painters. Then why did not his pictures convey the same impression of truth to ordinary spectators? But, again, in his second volume, he had been led to praise in terms hardly less enthusiastic than those applied to Turner, the frescoes of the Italian "primitives," so *naifs*, so limited in imitative resources, though representing so beautifully a religious ideal. Then what are the true limits of idealism in art? Sometimes in defending Turner, Ruskin seemed to be pleading for idealism as against the material imitation of the Dutch painters; at other times, to be pleading for realism as against the ideal compositions of the school of Claude. He perceived the difficulties which all this presents to careless readers, and the appearance of contradiction to which it exposed him. He

[1] Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v. § 7.

[2] It is probable that Parts vi. and vii. in the Fifth Volume were written, at any rate in the first draft, at about the same time as the Fourth Volume, but were held over, owing to the bulk of that volume.

states the case very clearly in the hitherto unpublished piece, which is now given in the Introduction to Volume XI., and to which the reader will do well to turn at this point. And yet, once more: since the Second Volume of *Modern Painters* appeared, Ruskin had been prominently before the public as the champion of the Pre-Raphaelites, whose early work was distinguished among other characteristics by its elaborate finish and minuteness of detail. The critics with one consent fell upon Ruskin for his inconsistency in admiring at once the closely manipulated foregrounds of Millais in his early works and the misty distances of Turner. What, then, was it, in final analysis, in which the greatness of Turner consisted—in truths that he recorded, or in visions that he invented? Is it—as we have already asked (Vol. III. p. xix.)—the material, numberable beauties of nature that he puts before us, or is he great for adding

> "the gleam,
> The light that never was on land or sea,
> The consecration and the poet's dream?"

It was to resolve such questions, to clear up these ambiguities, that was Ruskin's first object in resuming *Modern Painters*. The reader will observe throughout the earlier chapters of the present volume a recurring refrain of allusion to hostile criticisms and apparent contradictions.[1] To some extent Ruskin never sought to deny the existence of self-contradictions in his work. He confessed, and even gloried, in them: for two reasons. First, as we have already said, and as must constantly be borne in mind in reading Ruskin, his principal book was written at intervals during seventeen years; he was twenty-four when he began it, and forty-one when he ended it. It is idle to seek in a book thus composed for the same fixity of standpoint or consistency of view that is expected in a single treatise. "All true opinions," he says, "are living, and show their life by being capable of nourishment; therefore of change."[2] And, secondly, though Truth is one, yet since Error is various, the statements of the truth must be as many-sided as the faults which it has to correct. Ruskin illustrates this thought in his diary of 1849 from his supreme arbiter—the text of the Bible:—

> "It will be found that throughout the Scriptures there are on every subject two opposite groups of texts; and a middle group, which contains the truth that rests between the two others. The opposite texts are guards against the abuse of the central texts—guards set in opposite directions; and if these guards are considered

[1] See Vol. XII. p. li.

[2] Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v. § 8; and compare *Ethics of the Dust*, § 87.

> as themselves containing the truth, instead of being a mere fence against some form of error, all manner of falsehood may be supported in scriptural language. But on the other hand, this complicated structure, while it betrays the careless, rewards the faithful reader; and when it is fully understood presents a form of security against error such as could not in any otherwise have been attained (like the Mont Blanc set between opponent fan-shaped strata)—a security which every thoughtful and earnest reader has felt. For instance, 'Rejoice evermore' and 'Blessed are they that mourn' are two guarding and contradictory texts; and the truth they guard is the central text 'But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye."[1]

Fortified by these reflections, Ruskin often gloried in the charge that he was apt to contradict himself. "I hope," he says, "I am exceedingly apt to do so. . . . I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times."[2] "I shall endeavour for the future," he writes elsewhere, "to put my self-contradictions in short sentences and direct terms, in order to save sagacious persons the trouble of looking for them."[3] It is possible by taking passages from their context, and isolating them from the statements to which they are severally opposed, to represent Ruskin in turn as preaching distinctness and indistinctness in art, finish and incompleteness, idealism and realism, minuteness and breadth. But, having in the first two volumes of *Modern Painters* stated at different places different sides of the polygon of truth as he conceived it, he now set himself in this third volume—not, as he says,[4] methodically, but yet with a steady aim—to define his central position on many of the vexed questions which have been indicated above. "In the main aim and principle" of *Modern Painters*, as he says elsewhere,[5] "there is no variation from its first syllable to its last. It declares the perfectness and eternal beauty of the work of God; and tests all work of man by concurrence with, or subjection to that." In the application of this general principle to particular questions, Ruskin's central position, as defined in the earlier chapters of this volume, may perhaps be stated somewhat as follows: That art is the greatest which expresses the

[1] The Bible references are—1 Thessalonians v. 16; Matthew v. 4; 1 Peter iii. 14. With Ruskin's point here, compare p. 169 below.

[2] *Inaugural Address at the Cambridge School of Art*, § 13.

[3] *Two Paths*, § 86 *n.*, and in the same book, see Appendix i. See also *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 22 *n.* (Vol. XII. p. 44 *n.*), and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 21 *n.*

[4] See below, ch. i. § 2, p. 18.

[5] Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v. § 8.

greatest number of the noblest ideas. Art is the expression of an artist's soul. A man may have soul and not be able to paint, in which case he ought not to be a painter. But be his manipulation never so perfect, he is not a great artist unless he is also capable of receiving and imparting noble impressions. In this third volume, "nominally treating of 'Many Things,' will be found," says Ruskin himself, "the full expression of what I knew best; namely, that all 'things,' many or few, which we ought to paint, must be first distinguished boldly from the nothings which we ought not."[1] The business of the landscape-painter is to paint his impressions. The noblest impressions derivable from natural scenery are not those which lend themselves most easily to deceptive imitation. The way to receive noble impressions from Nature is first to study her with unquestioning fidelity. Imagination is a form of vision; it is idle and unprofitable unless it is of things seen by the mind's eye as truthfully, as precisely, as much in accordance with ideal truths as if seen by the corporeal eye. Finish in art is relative to the object pursued. It may be wasted on unworthy objects and thrown away on secondary matters; it is never right unless it is the means of giving an additional truth. Such are some of the leading propositions which may be gathered from the earlier chapters of this volume. "There is nothing that can be labelled in any of this," perhaps some may say; "this body of doctrine is not exactly realism, nor idealism, nor impressionism, and Ruskinism cannot be identified with any of them." That is true, and is perhaps what Ruskin meant when he said that no true disciple of his would ever be a Ruskinian,[2] for what he taught was only what he had learnt from the good and great of many different ages and many diverse schools.

The first few chapters of the Fourth Volume (i.–v.) follow, according to the analysis here suggested, upon the earlier chapters in the Third; for their purpose is to clear up other difficulties connected with the practice of Turner; marking the proper meaning and sphere of the picturesque; contrasting topographical accuracy with essential truth of impression; explaining Turner's principles of light, and the truths which are revealed in "Turnerian mystery."

The second portion of the Third Volume (chapter xi. onwards) has a somewhat different purpose, and Ruskin here adopts a different treatment. His method now becomes historical, and the subject-matter of the chapters is the History of Landscape as deducible from art and literature — the History, that is, of men's feelings towards natural

[1] *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism* (1878), § 16.
[2] *St. Mark's Rest*, § 209.

scenery—a subject which is resumed at the end of the Fourth Volume, in the chapters on "The Mountain Gloom" and "The Mountain Glory," wherein Ruskin discusses the influence of mountains on the life and character of peoples. These ten chapters (the last eight of the Third, and the last two of the Fourth) form, in subject-matter, a separate treatise; they have a most attractive theme, which Ruskin was the first to treat. The subject is a very large one; its proper discussion would require, says Ruskin, "knowledge of the entire history of two great ages of the world," and he does not claim for his chapters more than helpfulness in suggestion.[1] At a later time he admitted that the logic of his conclusions had not entirely satisfied himself. What is the cause or nature of love of mountains? If it is all that Ruskin claimed for it, why does it not affect all noble minds alike, and why must the account between Gloom and Glory be so evenly balanced? "The more I analysed," he says, "the less I could either understand or justify," and "the less I felt able to deny the claim of prosaic and ignobly-minded persons to be allowed to like the land level." "In the end," he adds, "I found there was nothing for it but simply to assure those recusant and grovelling persons that they were perfectly wrong, and that nothing could be expected, either in art or literature, from people who liked to live among snipes and widgeons."[2] But if Ruskin's historical and literary sketch of the Influence of Landscape cannot claim to have said the last word on the subject of which it treats, it abounds in suggestive thoughts; it has attracted many inquirers on to the same field,[3] and the title of one of the chapters—"Of the Pathetic Fallacy"—has become a stock phrase in subsequent literary criticism. The analyses of poetry, incidentally contained in this volume, together with those in the Second Volume, form, indeed, a singularly stimulating and suggestive essay in literary criticism. His particular judgments are indeed open to question; what judgments which are individual and genuine are not? Thus Rossetti

[1] See below, Preface, § 4, p. 7.

[2] *The Art of England* (1883), § 174. At this one point, then, at least, Ruskin may be held to have confirmed a criticism which Matthew Arnold made, upon reading the book in 1856—"full of excellent *aperçus*," he called it, but wanting in "the *ordo concatenatioque veri*" (*Letters of Matthew Arnold*, i. 51).

[3] As, for instance, Philip Gilbert Hamerton's *Landscape* (1885) and *Imagination in Landscape Painting* (1887); Josiah Gilbert's *Landscape in Art* (1885); and F. T. Palgrave's *Landscape in Poetry* (1897). On the subject of Classical Landscape, Ruskin's chapter has been followed by numerous essays; see, for instance, the chapter "Music and Painting" in J. P. Mahaffy's *Rambles and Studies in Greece* (1876), and W. R. Hardie's *Lectures on Classical Subjects* (1903). In German the great work on the subject is L. Friedländer's *Sittengeschichte Roms*, vol. ii. pp. 95–291; published in 1862. (6th ed. 1889.)

quarrelled with Ruskin's praise of Longfellow's *Golden Legend*, as also with the extracts from Browning, in the Fourth Volume (ch. xx. §§ *32*, *33*). "Really," he wrote, "the omissions in Browning's passage are awful, and the union with Longfellow worse. How I loathe *Wishi-washi*,—of course without reading it."[1] So, again, Matthew Arnold in his Oxford lectures *On Translating Homer* found fault with Ruskin for reading into the *Iliad* more sentiment than in fact exists there.[2] Other critics at the time objected to this or that judgment.[3] Yet Ruskin's sense of the excellent was so keen and so strong, and his analysis of his individual impressions so subtle, that few men can read these chapters without stimulus. "I never read anything," says Sir Leslie Stephen, of Ruskin's analysis of the imaginative faculty, "which seemed to me to do more to make clear the true characteristics of good poetry."[4]

Whether or not Ruskin succeeded in establishing a logical basis for mountain-lovers, he certainly did much to increase their number and supply noble grounds for their love. The chapters on "Mountain Beauty" which occupy the greater part of the Fourth Volume were the result, as we have seen, of studies and observations carried on during many years; and if, as he somewhere says, the greatest service in art or literature is to see accurately and report faithfully, these records of what he had seen among the mountains must be accounted among the most important portions of his work. This was Ruskin's own opinion. "The subject of the sculpture of mountains into the forms of perpetual beauty which they miraculously receive from God was," he says, "first taken up by me in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, and the elementary principles of it, there stated, form the most valuable and least faultful part of the book."[5] And the reader will remember that these mountain chapters were to have been republished by Ruskin—a design, however, which he only partially fulfilled.[6] "His power of seeing the phenomena vividly was as remarkable," says Sir Leslie Stephen, "as his power, not always shared by scientific writers, of making description interesting. I owe him a personal debt. Many people had tried their hands upon Alpine descriptions since Saussure; but Ruskin's chapters seemed to have the freshness of a new revelation.

[1] *Letters to William Allingham*, p. 181.
[2] But with regard to this criticism, see below, p. 213 *n*.
[3] See, for instance, *Fraser's Magazine*, June 1856, vol. 53, pp. 648–659, a review of the Third Volume, entitled "Ruskin on the Ancient and the Modern Poets."
[4] *The National Review*, April 1900.
[5] Introduction to W. G. Collingwood's *Limestone Alps of Savoy*, 1884.
[6] See the account of *In Montibus Sanctis*, Vol. III. p. 678.

The fourth volume of *Modern Painters* infected me and other early members of the Alpine Club with an enthusiasm for which, I hope, we are still grateful. Our prophet indeed ridiculed his disciples for treating Mont Blanc as a greased pole. We might well forgive our satirist, for he had revealed a new pleasure which we might mix with ingredients which he did not fully appreciate."[1] The Alpine Club, it should be stated, was not yet in existence, nor had any attempt as yet been made to scale the Matterhorn. Ruskin was not a climber in the Alpine Club's sense of the word, but he knew and loved the mountains as few other men have done, and in one respect at least he was an Alpine pioneer. He was the first to draw the Matterhorn accurately — the first, too, he says, to photograph it,[2] and the plates, no less than the descriptive chapters, in the fourth volume, may well have acted as a revelation and an incitement to the original founders of the Alpine Club—men who, as Sir Leslie Stephen says, had learnt, in part from Ruskin, to find in climbing scientific and artistic interests as well as athletic exercise. Another past President of the Club, Mr. Douglas Freshfield, has borne testimony to Ruskin's services in this respect. Ruskin, he says, "saw and understood mountains, and taught our generation to understand them in a way no one—none even of those who had been born under their shadow—had ever understood them before. To begin with, he had a faculty of precise observation, the basis of all scientific research, which made him the most formidable of critics to any man of science whose eyesight might be temporarily affected by some preconceived theory. But this appreciation of detail in no way interfered with Ruskin's romantic delight in the whole, in the sentiment and spirit of mountain landscapes. In some minds mountains take the place of cathedrals as a source of an emotion that may be called—in the wide sense of the word—religious. Ruskin was so happily constituted that he drew equal delight and inspiration both from architecture and scenery. No writer has added so much to our enjoyment of Alpine scenery as Ruskin."[3] His own emotions amid the mountains were, as we have seen in many a passage from his diaries, intensely religious. The verse which he quotes from the Psalms in the Fourth Volume (ch. xx. § 45) was the expression of personal experience: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh mine help."

[1] *The National Review*, April 1900.
[2] Introduction to W. G. Collingwood's *Limestone Alps of Savoy*.
[3] *The Alpine Journal*, May 1900, vol. xx. p. 127. Ruskin was a member of the Club from 1869 to 1882. Some correspondence and reminiscences in connexion with it are given in a later volume.

J. Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc.

The Valley of Lauterbrunnen

from the Castle of Manfred

In Ruskin's mind, however, there was a deeper object in view than to arouse interest in Alpine scenery. The human interest was never long absent from his thoughts when contemplating scenes of natural beauty or grandeur. It was not only that he moralised the mountains. Matthew Arnold says of the nature-poetry of Wordsworth that it enables us, not so much to front "the cloud of mortal destiny," as to "put it by."[1] To Ruskin, the study of nature was a call to action. It has been suggested above that, from one point of view, the chapters of the fourth volume on "The Mountain Glory" and "The Mountain Gloom" belong to the analysis of landscape-sentiment which is given in the third volume; and that is true, but their actual place was essential in Ruskin's scheme: they contained the practical gist, as he intended it, of his mountain-studies. "All the investigations undertaken by me at this time were connected in my own mind," he says, "with the practical hope of arousing the attention of the Swiss and Italian mountain peasantry to an intelligent administration of the natural treasures of their woods and streams."[2] He refers in this connexion to the Letters (given in a later volume of this edition) on the subject of Inundations, and, as we shall see in a subsequent Introduction, he formed schemes a few years afterwards for coming himself to live among the Alps, and trying his hand at relieving the Mountain Gloom. And here, in these volumes, he begs his readers, if they condemn the seclusion of the anchorites, to show themselves worthier by seeking inspiration for practical benevolence from the mountain solitudes; he desires to interest them in the hard struggles of the peasant-life, and bids them remember how much might be done by well-devised charity "to fill a whole Alpine valley with happiness."[3]

The attractiveness of his themes, the addition of the illustrations, and the splendour of his style—chastened in these later volumes, and freed from the affectations of the second, assured them an appreciative welcome. He found, too, that his words on other subjects were beginning to be listened to. His appendices in *Stones of Venice* and *Modern Painters* on Education attracted far more attention, he says, because part of his architectural and pictorial work, than ever afterwards his exclusively commercial and social analyses. He found interested listeners even in official circles, and a year or two later Royal Commissions and Select Committees called him before them.[4] Meanwhile reviews in the press were numerous, and, on the whole,

[1] *Memorial Verses.*
[2] *Deucalion*, ii. ("Revision.")
[3] Vol. iv. ch. xx. § 49, ch. xix. §§ 6, 32.
[4] See his account of a visit to Lord Palmerston in *Præterita*, iii. ch. ii. § 29.

very complimentary; his increasing popularity brought, on the other hand, some of the heavier organs into the field against him. But Ruskin's literary reputation was by this time so well established that it would not be of interest any longer to cite passages from the reviews whether favourable or the reverse.[1] One of the attacks upon him, however—that in the *Quarterly Review* for March 1856—requires mention as having called forth in reply one of the few productions of Burne-Jones's pen. This was an article entitled "Ruskin and the *Quarterly*," which he contributed to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* for June 1856, and which represented the joint feelings and views of himself and William Morris.[2] They repudiate with scorn the counter-assertion of the *Quarterly* "that the function of art is not to express thought but to make pretty things," and describe how from the dead-level of criticism given over to worship of the conventional and the merely pretty, "this man John Ruskin rose, seeming to us like a Luther of the arts." An earlier article in the same magazine had referred to Ruskin as "speaking, if ever man spoke, by the spirit and approval of heaven."[3] These volumes, said George Eliot a little later, of the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*, "contain, I think, some of the finest writing of the age. He is strongly akin to the sublimest part of Wordsworth."[4] "I gave him my grateful thanks," wrote Edward Thring in after years; "it is a noble book, and did noble work at the time, and will continue to do so. It did what I should

[1] The following list of reviews, additional to those mentioned in the text (which, however, does not claim to be exhaustive), will show how widely and fully the Third and Fourth Volumes of *Modern Painters* were noticed in the press :—

Volume iii.—Athenæum, January 26, 1856; *Critic*, February 15; *London Literary Journal*, February 15; *Weekly Despatch*, February 17; *Leader*, February 23; *Saturday Review*, February 23, March 8, March 29; *Economist*, March 1; *Idler* (edited by E. Wilberforce), May 1856 (pp. 229–235); *British Quarterly Review*, April 1856, vol. 23, pp. 442–467; *Nonconformist*, April 16; *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, May 1856, vol. 7, pp. 490–500; *Eclectic Review*, June 1856, vol. 11, N. S., pp. 545–563; *The Press*, June 14; *Blackwood's Magazine*, November 1856, vol. 80, pp. 503–527 ("Mr. Ruskin and *his Theories*—Sublime and Ridiculous"); *North American Review*, January 1857, vol. 84, pp. 379–406 (by Charles C. Everett).

Volume iv.—Daily News, April 21, 1856; *Literary Gazette*, April 26; *Athenæum*, May 10; *Critic*, May 15, June 2; *Leader*, May 31, June 14, June 17; *The Press*, June 28; *Eclectic Review*, August 1856, vol. 12, N. S., pp. 107–130.

Both volumes together.—Quarterly Review, March 1856, vol. 98, pp. 384–433; *Edinburgh Review*, April 1856, vol. 103, pp. 535–557 (by G. F. Chorley); *Examiner*, May 31, 1856; *Fraser's Magazine*, June 1857, vol. 55, pp. 619–635 (by "Shirley," *i.e.*, J. Skelton); *New Quarterly Review*, July 1856, vol. 5, pp. 257–262.

[2] The article is attributed to Morris in Mr. H. Buxton Forman's *The Books of William Morris* (1897, p. 27); but Mr. Mackail informs me that, while representing the opinions of both Morris and Burne-Jones, it was for the most part written by the latter.

[3] April 1856, pp. 212–225.

[4] Letter to Miss Sara Hennell, Jan. 17, 1858, in *George Eliot's Life*, ii. 7.

have thought impossible; it smashed up for ever the narrow technicalities of artists, and altered the point of view not only for them, but for the whole world, and gave the seeing eye, and thought, and feeling a practical reality which they will never lose but never had before. . . . I am grateful to him for having put me into a new world of observation, beauty, power, and progressive thought which amounted to what I have called it—a new world; and every day adds to the obligation."[1]

The *text* of the Third Volume of *Modern Painters* does not present the same variations as in the case of the two earlier volumes. It was never revised by the author in any of the published editions, and for the most part such variations as occur are of the nature only of press corrections or misprints.

In this edition, however, a few alterations have either been made in the text, or are noted beneath it; these alterations are in accordance with the author's markings in his own copy of the volume which he read for revision, about the year 1884, when he had some thought of re-casting the whole book. Several notes by the author of a later date than the original publication of the volume are, also, here given below the text; these were added by him to passages selected for publication in *Frondes Agrestes* in 1875. References to *Frondes* are only given where such notes occur; a general collation of the passages included in that volume having been already supplied (Vol. III. p. lxi.).

The *manuscripts* of the Third Volume to which the editors have had access, are described below (Appendix V., p. 433). They afford the same evidence as the MSS. of earlier volumes, of re-writing and revision. *Facsimiles* of two pages are given (pp. 80, 292–293). The MSS. include also several unpublished passages or discarded drafts. Extracts from these have occasionally been given in notes below the text (see, *e.g.*, pp. 21, 43, 44, 124, 149, 213); and two longer passages of some interest are printed in an Appendix (pp. 433–439).

The *illustrations* call for some notice. The third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856) was the first of that work to be illustrated, and the introduction of engravings had caused an enlargement of the page.[2] Some general remarks on the engravers employed by Ruskin are made in the Introduction to *The Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (1851), the earliest of his volumes in which he utilised their services. The engravers principally employed for that work—Lupton, Cuff, Armytage, and Boys—were again employed on *Modern Painters;* for a notice of them the

[1] *Life and Letters of Edward Thring,* by G. R. Parkin, 1898, vol. ii. pp. 245–246.
[2] See Vol. IV. p. xi.

[*Bibliographical Note.*—Enumeration is here made of the separate editions of *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. For the bibliography of the complete work, and of selections from it, see Vol. III. pp. lviii.–lxiii.

First Edition (1856).—The title-page was as follows :—

> Modern Painters. | Volume III. | Containing | Part IV. | Of Many Things. | By John Ruskin, M.A. | Author of "The Stones of Venice," "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," etc. etc. | [*Quotation* from Wordsworth, as in vols. i. and ii.] | London : | Smith, Elder, & Co., 65, Cornhill. | 1856 | [*The Author reserves the right of translation.*]

Imperial 8vo, pp. xix. + 348. The Dedication printed in the former volumes was omitted. The Preface occupied pp. v.–xvi. ; Contents, pp. xvii.–xviii.; List of Plates, p. xix. ; Text, pp. 1–339 ; Appendix, pp. 341–348. The imprint at the foot of the last page, and of the reverse of the half-title, is "London : Printed by Spottiswoode & Co., New Street Square." Issued on January 15, 1856, in green ornamental cloth boards, uniform with vol. ii. Price, 38s.

Second Edition (1867).—This was an exact reprint of the First (although there were two or three misprints), except for the alteration of the date, and the addition of the words "Second Edition," on the title-page.

No other editions of the volume were issued separately. "Edition 3" below means the first edition of the volume in the complete book (1873).

Variæ Lectiones.—As this volume was not revised for the press by the author after its first appearance, the various readings are of very small moment; but the usual collation of all the editions is given for the sake of completeness.

List of Plates—called "List of Plates to Vol. III." in previous editions. The list here, p. xiii., is modelled on that in the original editions; but in No. 7 eds. 1 and 2 give, in the "engraved by" column, the names "Cuff; H. Swan"; and the 1888 edition "Messrs. Hanhart," which also in No. 12 has "Boussod, Valadon & Co.," and in Nos. 14 and 15 "George Allen." The small complete edition has in No. 7 "Maclagan & Cumming," and in Nos. 12, 14, 15, the same as in 1888. The list of woodcuts is here added.

Ch. ii. § 5, line 14 (see p. 38); quotation from Dante, eds. 1–3 read "Carey" for "Cary."

Ch. iii. § 2, author's note, the line of Dante has hitherto been incorrectly printed "Del 'nò,' per lì danar, vi 'sì' far ita" ; § 4, line 12, ed. 3 reads "principle" for "principal"; § 12, note, second paragraph, line 6, eds. 1–3 read "line or colour" for "lines or colours."

Ch. iv. § 9, line 7, "the next" altered to "this" in the present edition; § 16, line 33, "that" misprinted "what" in small complete edition ; last words (see p. 90).

Ch. v. § 4, last line, ed. 3 reads "Corregio" for "Correggio"; § 6, eight lines from end, eds. 1–3 read "or grief" for "and grief."

Ch. vii. § 8, first line of the Shakespeare quotation, eds. 1–3 read "invoke"; in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), and all later editions, the correct word "awake" is substituted.

Ch. viii. § 3, line 1, ed. 3 reads "former" for "form"; § 6, last line but three, "Medici" hitherto printed "Medicis"; § 7, line 28, "Tanto" hitherto printed "Tanta."

Ch. ix. § 7, line 20, eds. 1–3 read "Dolce" for "Dolci"; § 9, line 25, ed. 3 reads "place" for "plate"; § 13, line 9, the word "opposite" is omitted in this edition after "Plate 5" ; § 17, line 18, eds. 1–3 read "muscle-shells" for "mussel-shells."

Ch. xii. § 4, second note, eds. 1–3 read "Wendel" for "Wendell" ; § 13 (quotation from Delavigne), see p. 213 *n.*; § 15 *n.*, eds. 1–3 read "Maude" for "Maud."

Ch. xiii. § 25, eight lines from end, all editions hitherto give wrongly the reference to "Od. ii." ; it should be "Od. xi." ; § 28, twenty-one lines from the end eds. 2 and 3 read "Scott" for "Scot" ; in the third line of the terminal quotation from Shenstone, the MS. and eds. 1 and 2, 1873, 1888, read correctly "herds" ; misprinted "herbs" in 1892 and subsequent editions.

Ch. xiv. § 10, line 13, ed. 2 reads "mediation" for "meditation"; § 26, in the small complete edition, Plate 9 was by mistake duplicated.

Ch. xvi. § 42, line 2, eds. 1–3 read "except" for "expect."

Ch. xvii. §§ 7, 27, "Mrs. Radcliffe" hitherto printed "Mrs. Radclyffe" ; § 9 *n.*, line 16, the second "with" is omitted in eds. 1–3.

Ch. xviii. §§ 33–39 : these paragraphs are not numbered in eds. 1–3.]

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME III

PREFACE

1. As this preface is nearly all about myself, no one need take the trouble of reading it, unless he happens to be desirous of knowing—what I, at least, am bound to state—the circumstances which have caused the long delay of the work, as well as the alterations which will be noticed in its form.

The first and second volumes were written to check, as far as I could, the attacks upon Turner which prevented the public from honouring his genius, at the time when his power was greatest. The check was partially given, but too late; Turner was seized by painful illness not long after the second volume appeared; his works, towards the close of the year 1845, showed a conclusive failure of power; and I saw that nothing remained for me to write, but his epitaph.[1]

The critics had done their proper and appointed work; they had embittered, more than those who did not know Turner intimately could have believed possible, the closing years of his life;[2] and had blinded the world in general (as it appears ordained by Fate that the world always *shall* be blinded) to the presence of a great spirit among them, till the hour of its departure. With them, and their successful work, I had nothing more to do; the account of gain and loss, of gifts and gratitude, between Turner and his

[1] [The second volume appeared in 1846. In the Academy of that year Turner had several pictures; in 1847, only one; in 1848, none; in 1849, two; and in 1850, four; but all these latest works showed clear signs of failing powers: in 1846 both his mind and his sight partially failed—see Ruskin's outline of Turner's period in the *Notes on the Turner Collection*, 1856 (Vol. XIII.).]

[2] [See, again, the *Notes on the Turner Collection* (No. 530), where Ruskin gives a personal reminiscence to this effect.]

countrymen, was for ever closed. *He* could only be left to his quiet death at Chelsea,—the sun upon his face;[1] *they* to dispose a length of funeral through Ludgate, and bury, with threefold honour, his body in St. Paul's, his pictures at Charing Cross, and his purposes in Chancery. But with respect to the illustration and preservation of those of his works which remained unburied, I felt that much might yet be done, if I could at all succeed in proving that these works had some nobleness in them, and were worth preservation. I pursued my task, therefore, as I had at first proposed, with this only difference in method,—that instead of writing in continued haste, such as I had been forced into at first by the urgency of the occasion, I set myself to do the work as well as I could, and to collect materials for the complete examination of the canons of art received among us.

2. I have now given ten years of my life[2] to the single purpose of enabling myself to judge rightly of art, and spent them in labour as earnest and continuous as men usually undertake to gain position, or accumulate fortune. It is true, that the public still call me an "amateur"; nor have I ever been able to persuade them that it was possible to work steadily and hard with any other motive than that of gaining bread, or to give up a fixed number of hours every day to the furtherance of an object unconnected with personal interests. I have, however, given up so much of life to this object; earnestly desiring to ascertain, and be able to teach, the truth respecting art; and also knowing that this truth was, by time and labour, definitely ascertainable.

It is an idea too frequently entertained, by persons who

[1] [See *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 106 (Vol. XII. p. 133). For particulars of the controversy which arose on Turner's will, see Introduction to Vol. XIII.]

[2] [*i.e.*, from 1845; from the study of Italian art during his tour of that year Ruskin dated the beginning of his "man's work": see Vol. IV. p. xxxiv. With § 2 here compare a similar passage in "The Mystery of Life and its Arts" in *Sesame and Lilies*, § 101.]

are not much interested in art, that there are no laws of right or wrong concerning it; and that the best art is that which pleases most widely. Hence the constant allegation of "dogmatism" against any one who states unhesitatingly either preference or principle, respecting pictures. There are, however, laws of truth and right in painting, just as fixed as those of harmony in music, or of affinity in chemistry. Those laws are perfectly ascertainable by labour, and ascertainable no otherwise. It is as ridiculous for any one to speak positively about painting who has not given a great part of his life to its study, as it would be for a person who had never studied chemistry to give a lecture on affinities of elements; but it is also as ridiculous for a person to speak hesitatingly about laws of painting who has conscientiously given his time to their ascertainment, as it would be for Mr. Faraday to announce in a dubious manner that iron had an affinity for oxygen, and to put the question to the vote of his audience whether it had or not.[1] Of course there are many things, in all stages of knowledge, which cannot be dogmatically stated; and it will be found, by any candid reader, either of what I have before written, or of this book, that, in many cases, I am *not* dogmatic. The phrase, "I think so," or, "it seems so to me," will be met with continually; and I pray the reader to believe that I use such expression always in seriousness, never as matter of form.

3. It may perhaps be thought that, considering the not very elaborate structure of the following volumes, they

[1] [So in a letter to Dr. Furnivall, Ruskin writes:—

"VEVAY, *June 9th*, 1854.— . . . I don't say I wouldn't care for reputation if I had it, but until people are ready to receive all I say about art as 'unquestionable,' just as they receive what Faraday tells them about chemistry, I don't consider myself to have any reputation at all worth caring about."

The letter, from which this is an extract, is among (pp. 30–33) the privately-printed (1897) *Letters from John Ruskin to Frederick J. Furnivall*, and is reprinted in a later volume of this edition. For the respect in which Ruskin held "good Professor Faraday" (1791–1867), see *Deucalion*, ch. iii.; and *Mornings in Florence*, § 33. Faraday was on the National Gallery Commission of 1857, before which Ruskin gave evidence (see Vol. XIII.).]

might have been finished sooner. But it will be found, on reflection, that the ranges of inquiry engaged in demanded, even for their slight investigation, time and pains which are quite unrepresented in the result. It often required a week or two's hard walking to determine some geological problem, now dismissed in an unnoticed sentence; and it constantly needed examination and thought, prolonged during many days in the picture gallery, to form opinions which the reader may suppose to be dictated by caprice, and will hear only to dispute.[1]

A more serious disadvantage, resulting from the necessary breadth of subject, was the chance of making mistakes in minor and accessory points. For the labour of a critic who sincerely desires to be just, extends into more fields than it is possible for any single hand to furrow straightly. He has to take *some* note of many physical sciences; of optics, geometry, geology, botany, and anatomy; he must acquaint himself with the works of all great artists, and with the temper and history of the times in which they lived; he must be a fair metaphysician, and a careful observer of the phenomena of natural scenery.[2] It is not possible to extend the range of work thus widely, without running the chance of occasionally making mistakes; and if I carefully guarded against that chance, I should be compelled both to shorten my powers of usefulness in many directions, and to lose much time over what work I undertook. All that I can secure, therefore, is rightness in main points and main tendencies; for it is perfectly possible to protect oneself against small errors, and yet to make great and final error in the sum of work: on the other hand, it is equally possible to fall into many small errors, and yet be right in tendency all the while, and entirely

[1] [See the "Notes on the Louvre," given in Vol. XII. pp. 448–473, in order to exemplify the detailed studies of pictures on their technical side which Ruskin was in the habit of making.]

[2] [See in this connexion Ruskin's letter to Mrs. Carlyle, given in the Introduction, above, p. xlix.]

right in the end. In this respect, some men may be compared to careful travellers, who neither stumble at stones, nor slip in sloughs, but have, from the beginning of their journey to its close, chosen the wrong road; and others to those who, however slipping or stumbling at the wayside, have yet their eyes fixed on the true gate and goal (stumbling, perhaps, even the more because they have), and will not fail of reaching them. Such are assuredly the safer guides: he who follows them may avoid their slips, and be their companion in attainment.

Although, therefore, it is not possible but that, in the discussion of so many subjects as are necessarily introduced in the following pages, here and there a chance should arise of minor mistake or misconception, the reader need not be disturbed by the detection of any such. He will find always that they do not affect the matter mainly in hand.

4. I refer especially in these remarks to the chapters on Classical and Mediæval Landscape. It is certain, that in many respects, the views there stated must be inaccurate or incomplete; for how should it be otherwise when the subject is one whose proper discussion would require knowledge of the entire history of two great ages of the world? But I am well assured that the suggestions in those chapters are useful; and that even if, after farther study of the subject, the reader should find cause to differ from me in this or the other speciality, he will yet thank me for helping him to a certain length in the investigation, and confess, perhaps, that he could not at last have been right, if I had not first ventured to be wrong.

And of one thing he may be certified, that any error I fall into will not be in an illogical deduction: I may mistake the meaning of a symbol, or the angle of a rock-cleavage, but not draw an inconsequent conclusion. I state this, because it has often been said that I am not logical, by persons who do not so much as know what logic means. Next to imagination, the power of perceiving logical relation

is one of the rarest among men: certainly, of those with whom I have conversed, I have found always ten who had deep feeling, quick wit, or extended knowledge, for one who could set down a syllogism without a flaw; and for ten who could set down a syllogism, only one who could *entirely* understand that a square has four sides. Even as I am sending these sheets to press, a work is put into my hand, written to prove (I would, from the depth of my heart, it could prove) that there was no ground for what I said in *The Stones of Venice* respecting the logical probability of the continuity of evil. It seems learned, temperate, thoughtful, everything in feeling and aim that a book should be, and yet it begins with this sentence:—

"The question cited in our preface, 'Why not infinite good out of infinite evil?' must be taken to imply—for it else can have no weight,—that in order to the production of infinite good, the existence of infinite evil is indispensable."[1]

So, if I had said that there was no reason why honey should not be sucked out of a rock, and oil out of a flinty rock, the writer would have told me this sentence must be taken to imply—for it else could have no weight,—that in order to the production of honey, the existence of rocks is indispensable. No less intense and marvellous are the logical errors into which our best writers are continually falling, owing to the notion that laws of logic will help them better than common sense. Whereas any man who can reason at all, does it instinctively, and takes leaps over intermediate syllogisms by the score, yet never misses his footing at the end of the leap; but he who cannot instinctively argue, might as well, with the gout in both feet, try to follow a chamois hunter by the help of crutches, as to follow, by

[1] [*On the Duration of Evil: an Essay*, 1855. The writer states in his preface (pp. iii., iv.) that among the reasons inducing him to restate the arguments for the finiteness of evil "is the circumstance—noticed by several friends—that a layman of admired ability, in whose cordial respect for religion they truly rejoice, has stepped aside, when treating of other topics, to cast a weapon at those opinions." He then quotes from *The Stones of Venice* the last words of vol. iii. ch. iii. § 42 and the author's footnote thereto (Vol. XI. p. 165).]

the help of syllogism, a person who has the right use of his reason. I should not, however, have thought it necessary to allude to this common charge against my writings,[1] but that it happens to confirm some views I have long entertained, and which the reader will find glanced at in their proper place,[2] respecting the necessity of a more *practically* logical education for our youth. Of other various charges I need take no note, because they are always answered the one by the other. The complaint made against me to-day for being narrow and exclusive, is met to-morrow by indignation that I should admire schools whose characters cannot be reconciled;[3] and the assertion of one critic, that I am always contradicting myself, is balanced by the vexation of another, at my ten years' obstinacies in error.

5. I once intended the illustrations to these volumes to be more numerous and elaborate, but the art of photography now enables any reader to obtain as many memoranda of the facts of nature as he needs; and, in the course of my ten years' pause, I have formed plans for the representation of some of the works of Turner on their own scale; so that it would have been quite useless to spend time in reducing drawings to the size of this page, which were afterwards to be engraved of their own size.* I have therefore here only given illustrations enough to enable the reader,

* I should be very grateful to proprietors of pictures or drawings by Turner, if they would send me lists of the works in their possession; as I am desirous of forming a systematic catalogue of all his works.[4]

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[1] [See above, Introduction, pp. liii.–liv.]

[2] [See Appendix iii. in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*.]

[3] [See below, ch. x. § 5 *n.*, p. 173.]

[4] [This scheme has been already referred to: see Vol. XII. p. 370 *n.* The systematic catalogue was never made by Ruskin, though in various places he cast typical works by Turner into various groups: see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. (where the *Liber Studiorum* is thus classified); *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, 1856; *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, 1878. The plans for the representation of some of Turner's works "on their own scale" were not carried out either; though, a few years later, Ruskin made a beginning towards its realisation, with the assistance of Mr. George Allen: see the reproductions (on a reduced scale) of some of the drawings thus treated in Vol. XIII.]

who has not access to the works of Turner, to understand the principles laid down in the text, and apply them to such art as may be within his reach. And I owe sincere thanks to the various engravers who have worked with me, for the zeal and care with which they have carried out the requirements in each case, and overcome difficulties of a nature often widely differing from those involved by their habitual practice. I would not make invidious distinction, where all have done well; but may perhaps be permitted to point, as examples of what I mean, to the 3rd and 6th Plates in this volume (the 6th being left unlettered in order not to injure the effect of its ground), in which Mr. Le Keux and Mr. Armytage have exactly facsimiled, in line engraving, drawings of mine made on a grey ground touched with white, and have given even the *loaded* look of the body colour. The power of thus imitating actual touches of colour with pure lines will be, I believe, of great future importance in rendering Turner's work on a large scale. As for the merit or demerit of these or other drawings of my own, which I am obliged now for the sake of illustration often to engrave, I believe I could speak of it impartially, and should unreluctantly do so; but I leave, as most readers will think I ought, such judgment to them, merely begging them to remember that there are two general principles to be kept in mind in examining the drawings of any writer on art: the first, that they ought at least to show such ordinary skill in draughtsmanship, as to prove that the writer knows *what* the good qualities of drawing *are*;[1] the second, that they are never to be expected to equal, in either execution or conception, the work of accomplished artists — for the simple reason that in order to do *any*thing thoroughly well, the whole mind, and the whole available time, must be given to that single art. It is probable, for reasons which will be noted in the following pages, that the critical and executive faculties are

[1] [On this matter compare *Inaugural Address* at the Cambridge School of Art, § 7: "no man ever was a thorough judge of painting who could not draw."]

in great part independent of each other; so that it is nearly as great an absurdity to require of any critic that he should equal in execution even the work which he condemns, as to require of the audience which hisses a piece of vocal music that they should instantly chant it in truer harmony themselves. But whether this be true or not (it is at least untrue to this extent, that a certain power of drawing is *indispensable* to the critic of art), and supposing that the executive and critical powers always exist in some correspondent degree in the same person, still they cannot be cultivated to the same extent. The attention required for the development of a theory is necessarily withdrawn from the design of a drawing, and the time devoted to the realization of a form is lost to the solution of a problem. Choice *must* at last be made between one and the other power, as the principal aim of life; and if the painter should find it necessary sometimes to explain one of his pictures in words, or the writer to illustrate his meaning with a drawing, the skill of the one need not be doubted because his logic is feeble, nor the sense of the other because his pencil is listless.

6. As, however, it is sometimes alleged by the opponents of my principles, that I have never *done any*thing, it is proper that the reader should know exactly the amount of work for which I am answerable in these illustrations. When an example is given from any of the works of Turner, it is either etched by myself from the original drawing, or engraved from a drawing of mine, translating Turner's work out of colour into black and white, as, for instance, the frontispiece to the fourth volume. When a Plate is inscribed as "*after*" such and such a master, I have always myself made the drawing, in black and white, from the original picture; as, for instance, Plate 11 in this volume. If it has been made from a previously existing engraving, it is inscribed with the name of the first engraver at the left-hand lowest corner; as, for instance, Plate 18 in vol. iv. Outline etchings are either by my

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own hand on the steel, as Plate 12 here,[1] and 20, 21 in vol. iv.; or copies from my pen drawings, etched by Mr. Boys, with a fidelity for which I sincerely thank him; one, Plate 22, vol. iv., is both drawn and etched by Mr. Boys from an old engraving. Most of the other illustrations are engraved from my own studies from nature. The coloured Plate (7 in this volume) is from a drawing executed with great skill by my assistant, Mr. J. J. Laing, from MSS. in the British Museum; and the lithography of it has been kindly superintended by Mr. Henry Shaw, whose renderings of mediæval ornaments stand, as far as I know, quite unrivalled in modern art.[2] The two woodcuts of mediæval design, Figs. 1 and 3, are also from drawings by Mr. Laing, admirably cut by Miss Byfield.[3] I use this word "admirably," not with reference to mere delicacy of execution, which can usually be had for money, but to the perfect fidelity of facsimile, which is in general *not* to be had for money, and by which Miss Byfield has saved me all trouble with respect to the numerous woodcuts in the fourth volume; first, by her excellent renderings of various portions of Albert Dürer's woodcuts; and, secondly, by reproducing, to their last dot or scratch, my own pen diagrams, drawn in general so roughly that few wood-engravers would have condescended to cut them with care, and yet always involving some points in which care was indispensable. One or two changes have been permitted in the arrangement of the book, which make the text in these volumes not altogether a symmetrical continuation of that in former ones. Thus, I thought it better to put the numbers of paragraphs always at the left-hand side of the page;[4] and as the summaries, in small type, appeared to

[1] [In this edition reduced by photogravure. For a later reference to these and some other plates, as enabling the reader "to ascertain how far I can draw or not," see *Two Paths*, Appendix v. (reprinted in this edition from the first edition of that book).]

[2] [In this edition reproduced by Messrs. Maclagan & Cumming.]

[3] [See also Preface to *Modern Painters*, vol. v., and pt. vi. ch. x. § 9. For other notes on Ruskin's engravers, see above, Introduction, p. lxii.]

[4] [In this edition at the beginning of each paragraph.]

me for the most part cumbrous and useless, I have banished them, except where there were complicated divisions of subject which it seemed convenient to indicate at the margin. I am not sorry thus to carry out my own principle of the sacrifice of architectural or constructive symmetry to practical service.[1] The Plates are, in a somewhat unusual way, numbered consecutively through the two volumes, as I intend them to be also through the fifth. This plan saves much trouble in references.

I have only to express, in conclusion, my regret that it has been impossible to finish the work within the limits first proposed. Having, of late, found my designs always requiring enlargement in process of execution, I will take care, in future, to set no limits whatsoever to any good intentions. In the present instance I trust the reader will pardon me, as the later efforts of our schools of art have necessarily introduced many new topics of discussion.

And so I wish him heartily a happy New Year.

Denmark Hill, *Jan.* 1856.

[1] [For a similar remark in connexion with another rearrangement, see Explanatory Note to the "Venetian Index" in *The Stones of Venice* (Vol. XI. pp. 355–356).]

PART IV

OF MANY THINGS

CHAPTER I

OF THE RECEIVED OPINIONS TOUCHING THE "GRAND STYLE"

§ 1. In taking up the clue of an inquiry, now intermitted for nearly ten years,[1] it may be well to do as a traveller would, who had to recommence an interrupted journey in a guideless country; and, ascending, as it were, some little hill beside our road, note how far we have already advanced, and what pleasantest ways we may choose for farther progress.

I endeavoured, in the beginning of the first volume, to divide the sources of pleasure open to us in Art into certain groups, which might conveniently be studied in succession. After some preliminary discussion, it was concluded (Part I. Sec. II. Chap. III. § 6,) that these groups were, in the main, three; consisting, first, of the pleasures taken in perceiving simple resemblance to Nature (Ideas of Truth); secondly, of the pleasures taken in the beauty of the things chosen to be painted (Ideas of Beauty); and, lastly, of pleasures taken in the meanings and relations of these things (Ideas of Relation).

The first volume, treating of the Ideas of Truth, was chiefly occupied with an inquiry into the various success with which different artists had represented the facts of Nature,—an inquiry necessarily conducted very imperfectly, owing to the want of pictorial illustration.

The second volume merely opened the inquiry into the nature of ideas of Beauty and Relation, by analysing (as far as I was able to do so) the two faculties of the human

[1] [The second volume of *Modern Painters* was published in April 1846; the third in January 1856.]

mind which mainly seized such ideas; namely, the contemplative and imaginative faculties.

It remains for us to examine the various success of artists, especially of the great landscape-painter whose works have been throughout our principal subject, in addressing these faculties of the human mind, and to consider who among them has conveyed the noblest ideas of beauty, and touched the deepest sources of thought.

§ 2. I do not intend, however, now to pursue the inquiry in a method so laboriously systematic; for the subject may, it seems to me, be more usefully treated by pursuing the different questions which arise out of it just as they occur to us, without too great scrupulousness in marking connections, or insisting on sequences. Much time is wasted by human beings, in general, on establishment of systems;[1] and it often takes more labour to master the intricacies of an artificial connection, than to remember the separate facts which are so carefully connected. I suspect that system-makers, in general, are not of much more use, each in his own domain, than, in that of Pomona, the old women who tie cherries upon sticks, for the more convenient portableness of the same. To cultivate well, and choose well, your cherries, is of some importance; but if they can be had in their own wild way of clustering about their crabbed stalk, it is a better connection for them than any other; and, if they cannot, then, so that they be not bruised, it makes to a boy of a practical disposition not much difference whether he gets them by handfuls, or in beaded symmetry on the exalting stick. I purpose, therefore, henceforward to trouble myself little with sticks or twine, but to arrange my chapters with a view to convenient reference, rather than to any careful division of subjects, and to follow out, in any by-ways that may open, on right hand or left, whatever question it seems useful at any moment to settle.

§ 3. And, in the outset, I find myself met by one which I ought to have touched upon before — one of especial

[1] [Compare the Introduction, above, p. li., and below, p. 385 *n.*]

interest in the present state of the Arts. I have said that the art is greatest which includes the greatest ideas;[1] but I have not endeavoured to define the nature of this greatness in the ideas themselves. We speak of great truths, of great beauties, great thoughts. What is it which makes one truth greater than another, one thought greater than another? This question is, I repeat, of peculiar importance at the present time; for, during a period now of some hundred and fifty years, all writers on Art who have pretended to eminence, have insisted much on a supposed distinction between what they call the Great and the Low Schools; using the terms "High Art,"[2] "Great or Ideal Style," and other such, as descriptive of a certain noble manner of painting, which it was desirable that all students of Art should be early led to reverence and adopt; and characterising as "vulgar," or "low," or "realist," another manner of painting and conceiving, which it was equally necessary that all students should be taught to avoid.

But lately this established teaching, never very intelligible, has been gravely called in question. The advocates and self-supposed practisers of "High Art" are beginning to be looked upon with doubt, and their peculiar phraseology to be treated with even a certain degree of ridicule. And other forms of Art are partly developed among us, which do not pretend to be high, but rather to be strong, healthy, and humble. This matter of "highness" in Art, therefore, deserves our most careful consideration. Has it been, or is it, a true highness, a true princeliness, or only a show of it, consisting in courtly manners and robes of

[1] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. i., last words of ch. ii. (Vol. III. p. 92).]

[2] [The earliest use of the phrase "high art" given in Murray's *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* is in Kingsley's *Plays and Puritans* (1856, p. 31); but the phrase was certainly a current jest in 1846, when Wyatt's huge equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington was hoisted on to the arch at the top of Constitution Hill, from which it was removed in 1883. See also C. R. Leslie's *Handbook for Young Painters* (1855, p. 60): "Latterly, the term 'High' has generally been exchanged for 'Religious,' which means Art of which the subjects are from the Bible or the legends of the Church. I should make no objection to the definition as a matter of convenience, and if understood no otherwise than of Art of which the theme is religious. But, I fear, it is too much received, and intended as defining a style necessarily differing from other styles."]

state? Is it rocky height or cloudy height, adamant or vapour, on which the sun of praise so long has risen and set? It will be well at once to consider this.

§ 4. And first, let us get, as quickly as may be, at the exact meaning with which the advocates of "High Art" use that somewhat obscure and figurative term.

I do not know that the principles in question are anywhere more distinctly expressed than in two papers in the *Idler*, written by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of course under the immediate sanction of Johnson; and which may thus be considered as the utterance of the views then held upon the subject by the artists of chief skill, and critics of most sense, arranged in a form so brief and clear, as to admit of their being brought before the public for a morning's entertainment. I cannot, therefore, it seems to me, do better than quote these two letters, or at least the important parts of them, examining the exact meaning of each passage as it occurs. There are, in all, in the *Idler* three letters on painting, Nos. 76, 79, and 82; of these, the first is directed only against the impertinences of pretended connoisseurs, and is as notable for its faithfulness, as for its wit, in the description of the several modes of criticism in an artificial and ignorant state of society: it is only, therefore, in the two last papers that we find the expression of the doctrines which it is our business to examine.

No. 79 (Saturday, Oct. 20th, 1759) begins, after a short preamble, with the following passage:—

"Amongst the Painters, and the writers on Painting, there is one maxim universally admitted and continually inculcated. *Imitate nature* is the invariable rule; but I know none who have explained in what manner this rule is to be understood; the consequence of which is, that every one takes it in the most obvious sense—that objects are represented naturally, when they have such relief that they seem real. It may appear strange, perhaps, to hear this sense of the rule disputed; but it must be considered, that,

if the excellency of a Painter consisted only in this kind of imitation, Painting must lose its rank, and be no longer considered as a liberal art, and sister to Poetry: this imitation being merely mechanical, in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best; for the Painter of genius cannot stoop to drudgery, in which the understanding has no part; and what pretence has the Art to claim kindred with Poetry, but by its power over the imagination? To this power the Painter of genius directs him; in this sense he studies Nature, and often arrives at his end, even by being unnatural in the confined sense of the word.

"The grand style of Painting requires this minute attention to be carefully avoided, and must be kept as separate from it as the style of Poetry from that of History. (Poetical ornaments destroy that air of truth and plainness which ought to characterise History; but the very being of Poetry consists in departing from this plain narrative, and adopting every ornament that will warm the imagination.*) To desire to see the excellences of each style united—to mingle the Dutch with the Italian school, is to join contrarieties which cannot subsist together, and which destroy the efficacy of each other."[1]

§ 5. We find, first, from this interesting passage, that the writer considers the Dutch and Italian masters as severally

* I have put this sentence in a parenthesis, because it is inconsistent with the rest of the statement, and with the general teaching of the paper; since that which "attends only to the invariable," cannot certainly adopt "every ornament that will warm the imagination."

[1] [In one draft of the chapter Ruskin here pauses to point out at once "a dangerous obscurity in the author's language. There are two kinds of imitative art: one, clumsy and coarse, which nevertheless attains very easily nearly a deceptive resemblance of reality, as in the common instances of game painted hanging up on boards, figures leaning over picture-frames, common scene-painting, and such like. The other kind of imitative art represents a great deal more of the details of the object, but by no means reaches a deceptive resemblance of it; as, for instance, a striking engraving by Albert Dürer, which no one would actually mistake for the scene or object represented. On the relations and possible unity of these two branches of imitative art, I shall have much to say presently; meanwhile I only wish to point out that Reynolds, or whoever this writer is,

representative of the low and high schools; next, that he considers the Dutch painters as excelling in a mechanical imitation, "in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best;" and, thirdly, that he considers the Italian painters as excelling in a style which corresponds to that of imaginative poetry in literature, and which has an exclusive right to be called the grand style.

I wish that it were in my power entirely to concur with the writer, and to enforce this opinion thus distinctly stated. I have never been a zealous partisan of the Dutch school, and should rejoice in claiming Reynolds's authority for the assertion, that their manner was one "in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best." But before his authority can be so claimed, we must observe exactly the meaning of the assertion itself, and separate it from the company of some others not perhaps so admissible. First, I say, we must observe Reynolds's exact meaning, for (though the assertion may at first appear singular) a man who uses accurate language is always more liable to misinterpretation than one who is careless in his expressions. We may assume that the latter means very nearly what we at first suppose him to mean, for words which have been uttered without thought may be received without examination. But when a writer or speaker may be fairly supposed to have considered his expressions carefully, and, after having revolved a number of terms in his mind, to have chosen the one which *exactly* means the thing he intends to say, we may be assured that what costs him time to select, will require from us time to understand; and that we shall do him wrong, unless we pause to reflect how the word which he has actually employed differs from other words which it seems he *might* have employed. It thus constantly happens that persons themselves unaccustomed to think clearly, or

carelessly confuses the two; that he, in so doing, does injustice to many members of the imitative schools by speaking of them as if they all had no other aim than that of imitative relief; and he does too much honour to other members, who had indeed no other aim than this, by talking of them as on a level with writers of history, thus putting Paul Potter and . . . [name indecipherable] in the same rank with Thucydides."]

speak correctly, misunderstand a logical and careful writer, and are actually in more danger of being misled by language which is measured and precise, than by that which is loose and inaccurate.[1]

§ 6. Now, in the instance before us, a person not accustomed to good writing might very rashly conclude that when Reynolds spoke of the Dutch School as one "in which the slowest intellect was sure to succeed best," he meant to say that every successful Dutch painter was a fool. We have no right to take his assertion in that sense. He says, the *slowest* intellect. We have no right to assume that he meant the *weakest*. For it is true, that in order to succeed in the Dutch style, a man has need of qualities of mind eminently deliberate and sustained. He must be possessed of patience rather than of power; and must feel no weariness in contemplating the expression of a single thought for several months together. As opposed to the changeful energies of the imagination, these mental characters may be properly spoken of as under the general term —slowness of intellect. But it by no means follows that they are necessarily those of weak or foolish men.

We observe, however, farther, that the imitation which Reynolds supposes to be characteristic of the Dutch School is that which gives to objects such relief that they seem real, and that he then speaks of this art of realistic imitation as corresponding to *history* in literature.

§ 7. Reynolds, therefore, seems to class these dull works of the Dutch School under a general head, to which they are not commonly referred — that of *Historical* painting; while he speaks of the works of the Italian School not as historical, but as *poetical* painting. His next sentence will farther manifest his meaning.

"The Italian attends only to the invariable, the great and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal

[1] [On this subject, in connexion with Ruskin himself, see *A Joy for Ever*, § 140.]

Nature; the Dutch, on the contrary, to literal truth, and a minute exactness in the detail, as I may say, of Nature modified by accident. The attention to these petty peculiarities is the very cause of this naturalness so much admired in the Dutch pictures, which, if we suppose it to be a beauty, is certainly of a lower order, which ought to give place to a beauty of a superior kind, since one cannot be obtained but by departing from the other.

"If my opinion were asked concerning the works of Michael Angelo, whether they would receive any advantage from possessing this mechanical merit, I should not scruple to say, they would not only receive no advantage, but would lose, in a great measure, the effect which they now have on every mind susceptible of great and noble ideas. His works may be said to be all genius and soul; and why should they be loaded with heavy matter, which can only counteract his purpose by retarding the progress of the imagination?"

Examining carefully this and the preceding passage, we find the author's unmistakable meaning to be, that Dutch painting is *history;* attending to literal truth and "minute exactness in the details of nature modified by accident." That Italian painting is *poetry*, attending only to the invariable; and that works which attend only to the invariable are full of genius and soul; but that literal truth and exact detail are "heavy matter which retards the progress of the imagination."

§ 8. This being then indisputably what Reynolds means to tell us, let us think a little whether he is in all respects right. And first, as he compares his two kinds of painting to history and poetry, let us see how poetry and history themselves differ, in their use of *variable* and *invariable* details. I am writing at a window which commands a view of the head of the Lake of Geneva; and as I look up from my paper, to consider this point, I see, beyond it, a blue breadth of softly moving water, and the outline of the

mountains above Chillon, bathed in morning mist. The first verses which naturally come into my mind are—

> "A thousand feet in depth below
> The massy waters meet and flow;
> So far the fathom line was sent
> From Chillon's snow-white battlement."[1]

Let us see in what manner this poetical statement is distinguished from a historical one.

It is distinguished from a truly historical statement, first, in being simply false. The water under the Castle of Chillon is not a thousand feet deep, nor anything like it.* Herein, certainly, these lines fulfil Reynolds's first requirement in poetry, "that it should be inattentive to literal truth and minute exactness in detail." In order, however, to make our comparison more closely in other points, let us assume that what is stated is indeed a fact, and that it was to be recorded, first historically, and then poetically.

Historically stating it, then, we should say: "The lake was sounded from the walls of the Castle of Chillon, and found to be a thousand feet deep."

Now, if Reynolds be right in his idea of the difference between history and poetry, we shall find that Byron leaves out of this statement certain *un*necessary details, and retains only the invariable,—that is to say, the points which the Lake of Geneva and Castle of Chillon have in common with all other lakes and castles.

Let us hear, therefore.

> "A thousand feet in depth below."

"Below?" Here is, at all events, a word added (instead

* "MM. Mallet et Pictet, se trouvant sur le lac auprès du château de Chillon, le 6 Août, 1774, plongèrent à la profondeur de 312 pieds un thermomètre," etc.—SAUSSURE, *Voyages dans les Alpes*, chap. ii. § 33. It appears from the next paragraph that the thermometer was "au fond du lac."

[1] ["The Prisoner of Chillon," stanza vi. Ruskin quotes from memory; in the second line Byron wrote, "*Its* massy waters," and in the next, "*Thus much* the fathom-line."]

of anything being taken away); invariable, certainly in the case of lakes, but not absolutely necessary.

"The massy waters meet and flow."

"Massy!" why massy? Because deep water is heavy. The word is a good word, but it is assuredly an added detail, and expresses a character, not which the Lake of Geneva has in common with all other lakes, but which it has in distinction from those which are narrow, or shallow.

§ 9. "Meet and flow." Why meet and flow? Partly to make up a rhyme; partly to tell us that the waters are forceful as well as massy, and changeful as well as deep. Observe, a farther addition of details, and of details more or less peculiar to the spot, or, according to Reynolds's definition, of "heavy matter, retarding the progress of the imagination."

"So far the fathom line was sent."

Why fathom line? All lines for sounding are not fathom lines. If the lake was ever sounded from Chillon, it was probably sounded in mètres, not fathoms. This is an addition of another particular detail, in which the only compliance with Reynolds's requirement is, that there is some chance of its being an inaccurate one.

"From Chillon's snow-white battlement."

Why snow-white? Because castle battlements are not usually snow-white. This is another added detail, and a detail quite peculiar to Chillon, and therefore exactly the most striking word in the whole passage.

"Battlement!" Why battlement? Because all walls have not battlements, and the addition of the term marks the castle to be not merely a prison, but a fortress.

This is a curious result. Instead of finding, as we expected, the poetry distinguished from the history by the omission of details, we find it consist entirely in the *addition* of details; and instead of being characterised by regard only

of the invariable, we find its whole power to consist in the clear expression of what is singular and particular!

§ 10. The reader may pursue the investigation for himself in other instances. He will find in every case that a poetical is distinguished from a merely historical statement, not by being more vague, but more specific; and it might, therefore, at first appear that our author's comparison should be simply reversed, and that the Dutch School should be called poetical, and the Italian historical. But the term poetical does not appear very applicable to the generality of Dutch painting; and a little reflection will show us, that if the Italians represent only the invariable, they cannot be properly compared even to historians. For that which is incapable of change has no history, and records which state only the invariable need not be written, and could not be read.

§ 11. It is evident, therefore, that our author has entangled himself in some grave fallacy, by introducing this idea of invariableness as forming a distinction between poetical and historical art. What the fallacy is, we shall discover as we proceed; but as an invading army should not leave an untaken fortress in its rear, we must not go on with our inquiry into the views of Reynolds until we have settled satisfactorily the question already suggested to us, in what the essence of poetical treatment really consists. For though, as we have seen, it certainly involves the addition of specific details, it cannot be simply that addition which turns the history into poetry. For it is perfectly possible to add any number of details to a historical statement, and to make it more prosaic with every added word. As, for instance, "The lake was sounded out of a flat-bottomed boat, near the crab-tree at the corner of the kitchen-garden, and was found to be a thousand feet nine inches deep, with a muddy bottom." It thus appears that it is not the multiplication of details which constitutes poetry; nor their subtraction which constitutes history, but that there must be something either in the nature of the

details themselves, or the method of using them, which invests them with poetical power or historical propriety.

§ 12. It seems to me, and may seem to the reader, strange that we should need to ask the question, "What is poetry?" Here is a word we have been using all our lives, and, I suppose, with a very distinct idea attached to it; and when I am now called upon to give a definition of this idea, I find myself at a pause. What is more singular, I do not at present recollect hearing the question often asked, though surely it is a very natural one; and I never recollect hearing it answered, or even attempted to be answered. In general, people shelter themselves under metaphors, and while we hear poetry described as an utterance of the soul, an effusion of Divinity, or voice of nature, or in other terms equally elevated and obscure, we never attain anything like a definite explanation of the character which actually distinguishes it from prose.

§ 13. I come, after some embarrassment, to the conclusion, that poetry is "the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions."[1] I mean, by the noble emotions, those four principal sacred passions—Love, Veneration, Admiration, and Joy (this latter especially, if unselfish);[2] and their opposites—Hatred, Indignation (or Scorn), Horror, and Grief,—this last, when unselfish, becoming Compassion. These passions in their various combinations constitute what is called "poetical feeling," when they are felt on noble grounds, that is, on great and true grounds. Indignation, for instance, is a poetical feeling, if excited by serious injury; but it is not a poetical feeling if entertained on being cheated out of a small sum of money.[3] It is very possible the manner of the cheat may have been

[1] ["1854 . . . Definition of Poetry, written at Vevay, looking across lake to Chillon. It leaves out rhythm, which I now consider a defect in said definition; otherwise good": see *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 10.]

[2] [Compare the line from Wordsworth—one of Ruskin's favourite lines from that poet—quoted in *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 29), in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 5, in *The Art of England*, § 38; see also *Unto this Last*, § 77.]

[3] [On Righteous Anger, see also *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 45); *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 226); *Lectures on Art*, § 89.]

such as to justify considerable indignation; but the feeling is nevertheless not poetical unless the grounds of it be large as well as just. In like manner, energetic admiration may be excited in certain minds by a display of fireworks, or a street of handsome shops; but the feeling is not poetical, because the grounds of it are false, and therefore ignoble. There is in reality nothing to deserve admiration either in the firing of packets of gunpowder, or in the display of the stocks of warehouses. But admiration excited by the budding of a flower is a poetical feeling, because it is impossible that this manifestation of spiritual power and vital beauty can ever be enough admired.

§ 14. Farther, it is necessary to the existence of poetry that the grounds of these feelings should be *furnished by the imagination.* Poetical feeling, that is to say, mere noble emotion, is not poetry. It is happily inherent in all human nature deserving the name, and is found often to be purest in the least sophisticated. But the power of assembling, by *the help of the imagination,* such images as will excite these feelings, is the power of the poet or literally of the "Maker." *

* Take, for instance, the beautiful stanza in the "Affliction of Margaret":

"I look for ghosts, but none will force
Their way to me. 'Tis falsely said
That ever there was intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then, I should have sight
Of him I wait for, day and night,
With love and longing infinite."

This we call Poetry, because it is invented or *made* by the writer, entering into the mind of a supposed person. Next, take an instance of the actual feeling truly experienced and simply expressed by a real person.

"Nothing surprised me more than a woman of Argentière, whose cottage I went into to ask for milk, as I came down from the glacier of Argentière, in the month of March, 1764. An epidemic dysentery had prevailed in the village, and, a few months before, had taken away from her, her father, her husband, and her brothers, so that she was left alone, with three children in the cradle. Her face had something noble in it, and its expression bore the seal of a calm and profound sorrow. After having given me milk, she asked me whence I came, and what I came there to do, so early

Now this power of exciting the emotions depends of course on the richness of the imagination, and on its choice of those images which, in combination, will be most effective, or, for the particular work to be done, most fit. And it is altogether impossible for a writer not endowed with invention to conceive what tools a true poet will make use of, or in what way he will apply them, or what unexpected results he will bring out by them; so that it is vain to say that the details of poetry ought to possess, or ever do possess, any *definite* character. Generally speaking, poetry runs into finer and more delicate details than prose; but the details are not poetical because they are more delicate, but because they are employed so as to bring out an affecting result. For instance, no one but a true poet would have thought of exciting our pity for a bereaved father by describing his way of locking the door of his house:

> "Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
> 'The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead.'
> But of this in my ears not a word did he speak;
> And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek."[1]

In like manner, in painting, it is altogether impossible

in the year. When she knew that I was of Geneva, she said to me, 'she could not believe that all Protestants were lost souls; that there were many honest people among us, and that God was too good and too great to condemn all without distinction.' Then, after a moment of reflection, she added, in shaking her head, 'But that which is very strange is that of so many who have gone away, none have ever returned. I,' she added, with an expression of grief, 'who have so mourned my husband and my brothers, who have never ceased to think of them, who every night conjure them with beseechings to tell me where they are, and in what state they are! Ah, surely, if they lived anywhere, they would not leave me thus! But, perhaps,' she added, 'I am not worthy of this kindness, perhaps the pure and innocent spirits of these children,' and she looked at the cradle, 'may have their presence, and the joy which is denied to me.'" — Saussure, *Voyages dans les Alpes*, chap. xxiv.

This we do not call Poetry, merely because it is not invented, but the true utterance of a real person.

[1] [Wordsworth: the last lines of "The Childless Father."]

to say beforehand what details a great painter may make poetical by his use of them to excite noble emotions: and we shall, therefore, find presently that a painting is to be classed in the great or inferior schools, not according to the kind of details which it represents, but according to the uses for which it employs them.

§ 15. It is only farther to be noticed, that infinite confusion has been introduced into this subject by the careless and illogical custom of opposing painting to poetry, instead of regarding poetry as consisting in a noble use, whether of colours or words. Painting is properly to be opposed to *speaking* or *writing*, but not to *poetry*. Both painting and speaking are methods of expression. Poetry is the employment of either for the noblest purposes.

§ 16. This question being thus far determined, we may proceed with our paper in the *Idler*.

"It is very difficult to determine the exact degree of enthusiasm that the arts of Painting and Poetry may admit. There may, perhaps, be too great an indulgence as well as too great a restraint of imagination; if the one produces incoherent monsters, the other produces what is full as bad, lifeless insipidity. An intimate knowledge of the passions, and good sense, but not common sense, must at last determine its limits. It has been thought, and I believe with reason, that Michael Angelo sometimes transgressed those limits; and, I think, I have seen figures of him of which it was very difficult to determine whether they were in the highest degree sublime or extremely ridiculous. Such faults may be said to be the ebullitions of genius; but at least he had this merit, that he never was insipid; and whatever passion his works may excite, they will always escape contempt.

"What I have had under consideration is the sublimest style, particularly that of Michael Angelo, the Homer of painting. Other kinds may admit of this naturalness, which of the lowest kind is the chief merit; but in painting,

as in poetry, the highest style has the least of common nature."

From this passage we gather three important indications of the supposed nature of the Great Style. That it is the work of men in a state of enthusiasm. That it is like the writing of Homer; and that it has as little as possible of "common nature" in it.

§ 17. First, it is produced by men in a state of enthusiasm. That is, by men who feel *strongly* and *nobly;* for we do not call a strong feeling of envy, jealousy, or ambition, enthusiasm. That is, therefore, by men who feel poetically. This much we may admit, I think, with perfect safety. Great art is produced by men who feel acutely and nobly; and it is in some sort an expression of this personal feeling. We can easily conceive that there may be a sufficiently marked distinction between such art, and that which is produced by men who do not feel at all, but who reproduce, though ever so accurately, yet coldly, like human mirrors, the scenes which pass before their eyes.

§ 18. Secondly, Great Art is like the writing of Homer, and this chiefly because it has little of "common nature" in it. We are not clearly informed what is meant by common nature in this passage. Homer seems to describe a great deal of what is common:—cookery, for instance, very carefully in all its processes.[1] I suppose the passage in the *Iliad* which, on the whole, has excited most admiration, is that which describes a wife's sorrow at parting from her husband, and a child's fright at its father's helmet;[2] and I hope, at least, the former feeling may be considered "common nature." But the true greatness of Homer's style is, doubtless, held by our author to consist in his imaginations of things not only uncommon but impossible (such as spirits in brazen armour, or monsters with heads of men and bodies of beasts), and in his occasional delineations of

[1] [See, for instance, *Iliad*, i. 463 *seq.*]
[2] [*Iliad*, vi. 468.]

the human character and form in their utmost, or heroic, strength and beauty. We gather then on the whole, that a painter in the Great Style must be enthusiastic, or full of emotion, and must paint the human form in its utmost strength and beauty, and perhaps certain impossible forms besides, liable by persons not in an equally enthusiastic state of mind to be looked upon as in some degree absurd. This I presume to be Reynolds's meaning, and to be all that he intends us to gather from his comparison of the Great Style with the writings of Homer. But if that comparison be a just one in all respects, surely two other corollaries ought to be drawn from it, namely,—first, that these Heroic or Impossible images are to be mingled with others very unheroic and very possible; and, secondly, that in the representation of the Heroic or Impossible forms, the greatest care must be taken in *finishing the details*, so that a painter must not be satisfied with painting well the countenance and the body of his hero, but ought to spend the greatest part of his time (as Homer the greatest number of verses) in elaborating the sculptured pattern on his shield.

§ 19. Let us, however, proceed with our paper.

"One may very safely recommend a little more enthusiasm to the modern Painters; too much is certainly not the vice of the present age. The Italians seem to have been continually declining in this respect from the time of Michael Angelo to that of Carlo Maratti,[1] and from thence to the very bathos of insipidity to which they are now sunk; so that there is no need of remarking, that where I mentioned the Italian painters in opposition to the Dutch, I mean not the moderns, but the heads of the old Roman and Bolognian Schools; nor did I mean to include, in my idea of an Italian painter, the Venetian school, *which may be said to be the Dutch part of the Italian genius.*

[1] [Called also Carlo delle Madonne, 1625–1713. There is a portrait by him in the National Gallery, No. 174.]

I have only to add a word of advice to the Painters,—that, however excellent they may be in painting naturally, they would not flatter themselves very much upon it; and to the Connoisseurs, that when they see a cat or a fiddle painted so finely, that, as the phrase is, it looks as if you could take it up, they would not for that reason immediately compare the Painter to Raffaelle and Michael Angelo."

In this passage there are four points chiefly to be remarked. The first, that in the year 1759 the Italian painters were, in our author's opinion, sunk in the very bathos of insipidity. The second, that the Venetian painters, *i.e.*, Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese, are, in our author's opinion, to be classed with the Dutch; that is to say, are painters in a style "in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best." Thirdly, that painting naturally is not a difficult thing, nor one on which a painter should pride himself. And, finally, that connoisseurs, seeing a cat or a fiddle successfully painted, ought not therefore immediately to compare the painter to Raphael or Michael Angelo.

Yet Raphael painted fiddles very carefully in the foreground of his St. Cecilia,—so carefully, that they quite look as if they might be taken up. So carefully, that I never yet looked at the picture without wishing that somebody *would* take them up, and out of the way.[1] And I am under a very strong persuasion that Raphael did not think painting "naturally" an easy thing. It will be well to examine into this point a little; and for the present, with the reader's permission, we will pass over the first two statements in this passage (touching the character of Italian art in 1759, and of Venetian art in general), and immediately examine some of the evidence existing as to the real dignity of "natural" painting—that is to say, of painting carried to the point at which it reaches a deceptive appearance of reality.

[1] [See again, below, ch. ii. § 1; and for other references to the picture, Vol. IV. p. 212.]

CHAPTER II

OF REALIZATION

§ 1. In the outset of this inquiry, the reader must thoroughly understand that we are not now considering *what* is to be painted, but *how far* it is to be painted. Not whether Raphael does right in representing angels playing upon violins, or whether Veronese does right in allowing cats and monkeys to join the company of kings:[1] but whether, supposing the subjects rightly chosen, they ought on the canvas to look like real angels with real violins, and substantial cats looking at veritable kings; or only like imaginary angels with soundless violins, ideal cats, and unsubstantial kings.

Now, from the first moment when painting began to be a subject of literary inquiry and general criticism, I cannot remember any writer, not professedly artistical, who has not, more or less, in one part of his book or another, countenanced the idea that the great end of art is to produce a deceptive resemblance of reality. It may be, indeed, that we shall find the writers, through many pages, explaining principles of ideal beauty, and professing great delight in the evidences of imagination. But whenever a picture is to be definitely described,—whenever the writer desires to convey to others some impression of an extraordinary excellence, all praise is wound up with some such statements as these: "It was so exquisitely painted that you expected the figures to move and speak; you approached the flowers to enjoy their smell, and stretched your hand towards the fruit which had fallen from the branches. You shrunk back lest

[1] [For Veronese's own view of this matter, see the passage quoted by Ruskin in an appendix to his *Guide to the Academy at Venice.*]

the sword of the warrior should indeed descend, and turned away your head that you might not witness the agonies of the expiring martyr."

§ 2. In a large number of instances, language such as this will be found to be merely a clumsy effort to convey to others a sense of the admiration, of which the writer does not understand the real cause in himself. A person is attracted to a picture by the beauty of its colour, interested by the liveliness of its story, and touched by certain countenances or details which remind him of friends whom he loved, or scenes in which he delighted. He naturally supposes that what gives him so much pleasure must be a notable example of the painter's skill; but he is ashamed to confess, or perhaps does not know, that he is so much a child as to be fond of bright colours and amusing incidents; and he is quite unconscious of the associations which have so secret and inevitable a power over his heart. He casts about for the cause of his delight, and can discover no other than that he thought the picture like reality.

§ 3. In another, perhaps, a still larger number of cases, such language will be found to be that of simple ignorance —the ignorance of persons whose position in life compels them to speak of art, without having any real enjoyment of it. It is inexcusably required from people of the world that they should see merit in Claudes and Titians; and the only merit which many persons can either see or conceive in them is, that they must be "like nature."

§ 4. In other cases, the deceptive power of the art is really felt to be a source of interest and amusement. This is the case with a large number of the collectors of Dutch pictures. They enjoy seeing what is flat made to look round, exactly as a child enjoys a trick of legerdemain: they rejoice in flies which the spectator vainly attempts to brush away,[1] and in dew which he endeavours to dry by

[1] [See Ruskin's remarks on Vasari's anecdote of the fly supposed to have been painted by Giotto upon the nose of one of Cimabue's pictures, "Review of Lord Lindsay," § 45 (Vol. XII. p. 213). On the subject of pictures as windows, see

putting the picture in the sun. They take it for the greatest compliment to their treasures that they should be mistaken for windows; and think the parting of Abraham and Hagar inadequately represented if Hagar seems to be really crying.

It is against critics and connoisseurs of this latter stamp (of whom in the year 1759, the juries of art were for the most part composed) that the essay of Reynolds, which we have been examining, was justly directed. But Reynolds had not sufficiently considered that neither the men of this class, nor of the two other classes above described, constitute the entire body of those who praise Art for its realization; and that the holding of this apparently shallow and vulgar opinion cannot, in all cases, be attributed to the want either of penetration, sincerity, or sense. The collector of Gerard Dows and Hobbimas may be passed by with a smile; and the affectations of Walpole and simplicities of Vasari[1] dismissed with contempt or with compassion. But very different men from these have held precisely the same language; and one, amongst the rest, whose authority is absolutely, and in all points, overwhelming.

§ 5. There was probably never a period in which the influence of art over the minds of men seemed to depend less on its merely *imitative* power, than the close of the thirteenth century. No painting or sculpture at that time reached more than a rude resemblance of reality. Its despised perspective, imperfect chiaroscuro, and unrestrained flights of fantastic imagination, separated the artist's work from nature by an interval which there was no attempt to disguise, and little to diminish. And yet, at this very period, the greatest poet of that, or perhaps of any other age, and the attached friend of its greatest painter,[2] who

below, ch. x., pp. 171–173. The picture of Abraham and Hagar, often praised for its accurate delineation of a tear-drop, is the one by Guercino in the Brera at Milan: see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 203 *n.*).]

[1] [For Ruskin's opinion of Vasari, see note on Vol. XII. p. 258 *n.*]

[2] [So in the *Stones of Venice*, Ruskin calls Dante "the central man of all the world": see Vol. XI. p. 187, and compare Vol. XII. p. 477. For the relations of Dante and Giotto, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 188), and in this volume, ch. xviii. § 2; *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 400); *Ariadne Florentina*, § 58; and *Mornings in Florence*, §§ 2, 6, 26, 48, 53.]

must over and over again have held full and free conversation with him respecting the objects of his art, speaks in the following terms of painting and sculpture,[1] supposed to be carried to its highest perfection:—

"Qual di pennel fu maestro, e di stile,
Che ritraesse l' ombre e i tratti, ch' ivi
Mirar farieno uno ingegno sottile?
Morti li morti, e i vivi parean vivi:
Non vide me' di me, chi vide il vero,
Quant' io calcai, fin che chinato givi."
—Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto xii. l. 64.

"What master of the pencil, or the style,
Had traced the shades and lines that might have made
The subtlest workman wonder? *Dead, the dead,*
The living seemed alive; with clearer view,
His eye beheld not, who beheld the truth,
Than mine what I did tread on, while I went
Low bending." —Cary.

Dante has here clearly no other idea of the highest art than that it should bring back, as a mirror or vision, the aspect of things passed or absent.[2] The scenes of which he speaks are, on the pavement, for ever represented by angelic power, so that the souls which traverse this circle of the rock may see them, as if the years of the world had been rolled back, and they again stood beside the actors in the moment of action. Nor do I think that Dante's authority is absolutely necessary to compel us to admit that such art as this *might*, indeed, be the highest possible. Whatever delight we may have been in the habit of taking in pictures, if it were but truly offered to us, to remove at our will the canvas from the frame, and in lieu of it to behold, fixed for ever, the image of some of those mighty scenes which it has been our way to make mere themes for the artist's fancy; if, for instance, we could again behold the Magdalene receiving her pardon at Christ's feet, or the disciples sitting with Him at the table of Emmaus; and this,

[1] [The words "and sculpture" are here inserted in accordance with Ruskin's copy for revision. He no doubt remembered that in the passage quoted Dante is describing not paintings but sculpture, or rather "graffiti." In the first line of the quotation "o di stile" is now the accepted reading.]

[2] [See, for example, *Purgatorio*, x. 31 *seq.*]

not feebly nor fancifully, but as if some silver mirror that had leaned against the wall of the chamber, had been miraculously commanded to retain for ever the colours that had flashed upon it for an instant,—would we not part with our picture—Titian's or Veronese's though it might be?[1]

§ 6. Yes, the reader answers, in the instance of such scenes as these, but not if the scene represented were uninteresting. Not, indeed, if it were utterly vulgar or painful; but we are not yet certain that the art which represents what is vulgar or painful is itself of much value; and with respect to the art whose aim is beauty, even of an inferior order, it seems that Dante's idea of its perfection has still much evidence in its favour. For among persons of native good sense, and courage enough to speak their minds, we shall often find a considerable degree of doubt as to the use of art, in consequence of their habitual comparison of it with reality. "What is the use, to me, of the painted landscape?" they will ask: "I see more beautiful and perfect landscapes every day of my life in my forenoon walk." "What is the use, to me, of the painted effigy of hero or beauty? I can see a stamp of higher heroism, and light of purer beauty, on the faces round me, utterly inexpressible by the highest human skill."[2] Now, it is evident that to persons of this temper the only valuable pictures would, indeed, be *mirrors*, reflecting permanently the images of the things in which they took delight, and of the faces that they loved.[3] "Nay," but the reader interrupts

[1] [For the particular works by Veronese referred to, see § 10 of the next chapter; for Titian's "Emmaus" see "Notes on the Louvre" in Vol. XII. p. 451, and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 13.]

[2] [In one draft of the chapter Ruskin here continued :—

> "And, indeed, I think these persons much in the right. They know little of rural nature, who cannot see, in every hundred yards of her wild roads, landscapes more fair than were ever painted by human hand. They know little of humanity, whose only conceptions of heroism are formed from statues, and whose sympathy or reverence is excitable only by arched eyebrows and well turned limbs."]

[3] [In his copy for revision Ruskin notes here, "Quote Carlyle on Frederick picture." The reference is to *Friedrich*, book iv. ch. vi. : "'Why it is, probably, that Pictures exist in this world, and to what end the divine art of Painting was bestowed, by the earnest gods, upon poor mankind?' I could advise it, once, for

(if he is of the Idealist school), "I deny that more beautiful things are to be seen in nature than in art; on the contrary, everything in nature is faulty, and art represents nature as perfected." Be it so. Must, therefore, this perfected nature be imperfectly represented? Is it absolutely required of the painter, who has conceived perfection, that he should so paint it as to look only like a picture? Or is not Dante's view of the matter right even here, and would it not be well that the perfect conception of Pallas should be so given as to look like Pallas herself, rather than merely like a picture of Pallas?[1]

§ 7. It is not easy for us to answer this question rightly, owing to the difficulty of imagining any art which should reach the perfection supposed. Our actual powers of imitation are so feeble that wherever deception is attempted, a subject of a comparatively low or confined order must be chosen. I do not enter at present into the inquiry how far the powers of imitation extend; but assuredly up to the present period they have been so limited that it is hardly possible for us to conceive a deceptive art embracing a high range of subject. But let the reader make the effort, and consider seriously what he would give at any moment to have the power of arresting the fairest scenes, those which so often rise before him only to vanish; to stay the cloud in its fading, the leaf in its trembling, and the shadows in their changing; to bid the fitful foam be fixed upon the river, and the ripples be everlasting upon the lake; and then to bear away with him no darkened or feeble sunstain (though even that is beautiful), but a counterfeit which should seem no counterfeit—the true and perfect image of life indeed.[2] Or rather (for the full majesty of such a power is not thus sufficiently expressed) let him consider that it

a little! . . . I say, Here withal is one not phantasmal; of indisputable certainty. . . . Welcome, like one tiny islet of Reality amid the shoreless sea of Phantasms, to the reflective mind, seriously loving and seeking what is worthy and memorable, seriously hating and avoiding what is the reverse, and intent not to play the dilettante in this world."]

[1] [See *Purgatorio*, xii. 31.]

[2] [Compare *Lectures on Art*, § 187, where Ruskin quotes and applies this passage.]

would be in effect nothing else than a capacity of transporting himself at any moment into any scene—a gift as great as can be possessed by a disembodied spirit: and suppose, also, this necromancy embracing not only the present but the past, and enabling us seemingly to enter into the very bodily presence of men long since gathered to the dust; to behold them in act as they lived, but—with greater privilege than ever was granted to the companions of those transient acts of life—to see them fastened at our will in the gesture and expression of an instant, and stayed, on the eve of some great deed, in immortality of burning purpose. Conceive, so far as it is possible, such power as this, and then say whether the art which conferred it is to be spoken lightly of, or whether we should not rather reverence, as half divine, a gift which would go so far as to raise us into the rank, and invest us with the felicities, of angels?[1]

Yet such would imitative art be in its perfection. Not by any means an easy thing, as Reynolds supposes it. Far from being easy, it is so utterly beyond all human power that we have difficulty even in conceiving its nature or results—the best art we as yet possess comes so far short of it.

§ 8. But we must not rashly come to the conclusion that such art would, indeed, be the highest possible. There is much to be considered hereafter on the other side; the only conclusion we are as yet warranted in forming is, that Reynolds had no right to speak lightly or contemptuously of imitative art; that in fact, when he did so, he had not conceived its entire nature, but was thinking of some vulgar conditions of it, which were the only ones known to him,

[1] [In *Frondes Agrestes*, Section ii., "Power and Office of Imagination," a passage from chapter iv. (§ 5, below, p. 72) is first given (§ 9 in *Frondes*); then (at the beginning of § 10) the following words are inserted as a connecting link: "Yet because we thus reverence the power and art of imagination, let none of us despise the power and art of memory;" and then the passage here follows: "Let the reader consider seriously what he would give . . ." down to "felicities of angels,' at which latter point Ruskin adds in *Frondes* (1875), the following note:—

"Passage written in opposition to the vulgar notion that the 'mere imitation' of nature is easy, and useless."]

and that, therefore, his whole endeavour to explain the difference between great and mean art has been disappointed; that he has involved himself in a crowd of theories, whose issue he had not foreseen, and committed himself to conclusions which he never intended. There is an instinctive consciousness in his own mind of the difference between high and low art; but he is utterly incapable of explaining it, and every effort which he makes to do so involves him in unexpected fallacy and absurdity. It is *not* true that Poetry does not concern herself with minute details. It is *not* true that high art seeks only the Invariable. It is *not* true that imitative art is an easy thing. It is *not* true that the faithful rendering of nature is an employment in which "the slowest intellect is likely to succeed best." All these successive assertions are utterly false and untenable, while the plain truth, a truth lying at the very door, has all the while escaped him,—that which was incidentally stated in the preceding chapter,—namely, that the difference between great and mean art lies, not in definable methods of handling, or styles of representation, or choices of subjects, but wholly in the nobleness of the end to which the effort of the painter is addressed. We cannot say that a painter is great because he paints boldly, or paints delicately; because he generalizes or particularizes; because he loves detail, or because he disdains it. He is great if, by any of these means, he has laid open noble truths, or aroused noble emotions. It does not matter whether he paint the petal of a rose, or the chasms of a precipice, so that Love and Admiration attend him as he labours, and wait for ever upon his work. It does not matter whether he toil for months upon a few inches of his canvas, or cover a palace front with colour in a day, so only that it be with a solemn purpose that he has filled his heart with patience, or urged his hand to haste. And it does not matter whether he seek for his subjects among peasants or nobles, among the heroic or the simple, in courts or in fields, so only that he behold all things with a thirst for beauty, and a hatred

of meanness and vice. There are, indeed, certain methods of representation which are usually adopted by the most active minds, and certain characters of subject usually delighted in by the noblest hearts; but it is quite possible, quite easy, to adopt the manner of painting without sharing the activity of mind, and to imitate the choice of subject without possessing the nobility of spirit; while, on the other hand, it is altogether impossible to foretell on what strange objects the strength of a great man will sometimes be concentrated, or by what strange means he will sometimes express himself. So that true criticism of art never can consist in the mere application of rules; it can be just only when it is founded on quick sympathy with the innumerable instincts and changeful efforts of human nature, chastened and guided by unchanging love of all things that God has created to be beautiful, and pronounced to be good.[1]

[1] [An earlier draft of the concluding portion of this chapter is different:—

"Let either the artist base his efforts, or the critic his opinion, on a *desire to be great,* and they are as sure to fall into a spurious art, and a false judgment, as if they had deliberately chosen the paths of Darkness. Both of them must love what is beautiful and right for its own sake, and must follow it, and judge of it, by instinct. . . . They may rest assured that they are never right but when they were working for enjoyment, or judging by enjoyment; if they enjoy what is wrong, they may discipline themselves, so as to enjoy something else, but if they once pretend that they enjoy what they do not, it is all over with them. One honest question, therefore, will always keep both artists and critics right: 'Do I heartily love this? Am I doing it for love of it? Am I praising it for love of it? If not, I will not do it, I will not praise it.'"

This earlier draft much resembles a passage in *The Two Paths,* § 49.]

CHAPTER III

OF THE REAL NATURE OF GREATNESS OF STYLE

§ 1. I DOUBT not that the reader was ill-satisfied with the conclusion arrived at in the last chapter. That "great art" is art which represents what is beautiful and good, may not seem a very profound discovery; and the main question may be thought to have been all the time lost sight of, namely, "What is beautiful, and what is good?" No; those are not the main, at least not the first questions; on the contrary, our subject becomes at once opened and simplified as soon as we have left those the *only* questions.[1] For observe, our present task, according to our old plan, is merely to investigate the relative degrees of the *beautiful* in the art of different masters; and it is an encouragement to be convinced, first of all, that what is lovely will also be great, and what is pleasing, noble. Nor is the conclusion so much a matter of course as it at first appears, for, surprising as the statement may seem, all the confusion into which Reynolds has plunged both himself and his readers, in the essay we have been examining, results primarily from a doubt in his own mind *as to the existence of beauty*

[1] [In a previous draft of the chapter Ruskin here says that the conclusion already reached at any rate had the advantage of widening our scope of admiration :—

"If it was determined to hold with the writer whose opinion we have been examining that Michael Angelo's was the great manner, we should have been compelled to pass by Angelico and Rembrandt with contempt. If we allowed ourselves to be convinced by any of the arguments adduced in favour of merely imitative art, and assumed realization to be the test of powers, a few cabinet pictures of Mieris might have been constituted the types, and fixed the limits of our admiration. But our present conclusion, though somewhat vague, is at least liberal; and though it may seem to multiply the chances of mistake, multiplies also the permissions of enjoyment. It is curious how much mankind stand in need of such permission : —how they ask one another's leave to follow their own instincts."]

at all. In the next paper I alluded to, No. 82 (which needs not, however, to be examined at so great length), he calmly attributes the whole influence of beauty to custom, saying, that "he has no doubt, if we were more used to deformity than to beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; as if the whole world should agree that Yes and No should change their meanings; Yes would then deny, and No would affirm!"

§ 2. The world does, indeed, succeed—oftener than is, perhaps, altogether well for the world—in making Yes mean No, and No mean Yes.* But the world has never succeeded, nor ever will, in making itself delight in black clouds more than in blue sky, or love the dark earth better than the rose that grows from it. Happily for mankind, beauty and ugliness are as positive in their nature as physical pain and pleasure, as light and darkness, or as life and death; and though they may be denied or misunderstood in many fantastic ways, the most subtle reasoner will at last find that colour and sweetness are still attractive to him, and that no logic will enable him to think the rainbow sombre, or the violet scentless. But the theory that beauty was merely a result of custom was very common in Johnson's time. Goldsmith has, I think, expressed it with more force and wit than any other writer, in various passages of the *Citizen of the World.*[1] And it was, indeed, a curious retribution of the folly of the world of art, which for some three centuries had given itself recklessly to the

* De no per li denar vi si far "ita."[2]

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[1] [Compare *Modern Painters,* vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 67), where (in a note of 1883) *The Citizen of the World* is again referred to in this connexion. See especially Letter 3 *ad fin.*: "To speak my secret sentiments, most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horribly ugly; I can hardly endure the sight of them; they no way resemble the beauties of China; the Europeans have a quite different idea of beauty from us. When I reflect on the small-footed perfections of an Eastern beauty, how is it possible I should have eyes for a woman whose feet are ten inches long . . . and teeth of a most odious whiteness."]

[2] [Dante: *Inferno,* xxi. 42: "Of 'no' for lucre there an 'ay' is quickly made" (Cary).]

pursuit of beauty, that at last it should be led to deny the very existence of what it had so morbidly and passionately sought. It was as if a child should leave its home to pursue the rainbow, and then, breathless and hopeless, declare that it did not exist. Nor is the lesson less useful which may be gained in observing the adoption of such a theory by Reynolds himself. It shows how completely an artist may be unconscious of the principles of his own work, and how he may be led by instinct to *do* all that is right, while he is misled by false logic to *say* all that is wrong. For nearly every word that Reynolds wrote was contrary to his own practice; he seems to have been born to teach all error by his precept, and all excellence by his example;[1] he enforced with his lips generalization and idealism, while with his pencil he was tracing the patterns of the dresses of the belles of his day; he exhorted his pupils to attend only to the invariable, while he himself was occupied in distinguishing every variation of womanly temper; and he denied the existence of the beautiful, at the same instant that he arrested it as it passed, and perpetuated it for ever.

§ 3. But we must not quit the subject here. However inconsistently or dimly expressed, there is, indeed, some truth in that commonly accepted distinction between high and low art.[2] That a thing should be beautiful is not enough; there is, as we said in the outset, a higher and lower range of beauty, and some ground for separating into various and unequal ranks painters who have, nevertheless, each in his several way, represented something that was beautiful or good.

Nor, if we would, can we get rid of this conviction.

[1] [In his Oxford lectures (1875) on "The *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds"—of which the MS. notes are printed in a later volume of this edition—Ruskin cited this passage at once to confirm and to correct it. Reynolds, he said, "seems to have been born to teach all error by his example; but that is because the only errors that were to be found in his precept were seized upon as its essence by scholars determined to err."]

[2] [See Appendix v., below, p. 433, for some additional matter on the subject of "greatness."]

We have at all times some instinctive sense that the function of one painter is greater than that of another, even supposing each equally successful in his own way; and we feel that, if it were possible to conquer prejudice, and do away with the iniquities of personal feeling, and the insufficiencies of limited knowledge, we should all agree in this estimate, and be able to place each painter in his right rank, measuring them by a true scale of nobleness. We feel that the men in the higher classes of the scale would be, in the full sense of the word, Great,—men whom one would give much to see the faces of but for an instant; and that those in the lower classes of the scale (though none were admitted but who had true merit of some kind) would be very small men, not greatly exciting either reverence or curiosity. And with this fixed instinct in our minds, we permit our teachers daily to exhort their pupils to the cultivation of "great art,"—neither they nor we having any very clear notion as to what the greatness consists in: but sometimes inclining to think it must depend on the space of the canvas, and that art on a scale of six feet by ten is something spiritually separated from that on a scale of three feet by five;—sometimes holding it to consist in painting the nude body, rather than the body decently clothed;—sometimes being convinced that it is connected with the study of past history, and that the art is only great which represents what the painter never saw, and about which he knows nothing;—and sometimes being firmly persuaded that it consists in generally finding fault with, and endeavouring to mend, whatsoever the Divine wisdom has made. All which various errors, having yet some notes and atoms of truth in the make of each of them, deserve some attentive analysis, for they come under that general law,—that "the corruption of the best is the worst."[1] There are not *worse* errors going than these four; and yet the truth they contain, and the instinct which urges

[1] [For other passages in which Ruskin dwells (in various relations) on this proverbial saying, see *Time and Tide*, §§ 52, 53, 139; and *Munera Pulveris*, § 100.]

many to preach them, are at the root of all healthy growth in art. We ruin one young painter after another by telling him to follow great art, without knowing ourselves what greatness is; and yet the feeling that it verily *is* something, and that there are depths and breadths, shallows and narrows, in the matter, is all that we have to look to, if we would ever make our art serviceable to ourselves or others. To follow art for the sake of being a great man, and therefore to cast about continually for some means of achieving position or attracting admiration, is the surest way of ending in total extinction.[1] And yet it is only by honest reverence for art itself, and by great self-respect in the practice of it, that it can be rescued from dilettanteism, raised to approved honourableness, and brought to the proper work it has to accomplish in the service of man.

§ 4. Let us therefore look into the facts of the thing, not with any metaphysical, or otherwise vain and troublesome effort at acuteness, but in a plain way; for the facts themselves are plain enough, and may be plainly stated, only the difficulty is, that out of these facts, right and left, the different forms of misapprehension branch into grievous complexity, and branch so far and wide, that if once we try to follow them, they will lead us quite from our mark into other separate, though not less interesting discussions. The best way will be, therefore, I think, to sketch out at once in this chapter, the different characters which really constitute "greatness" of style, and to indicate the principal directions of the outbranching misapprehensions of them; then, in the succeeding chapters, to take up in succession those which need more talk about them, and follow out at leisure whatever inquiries they may suggest.

§ 5. I. Choice of Noble Subject.—Greatness of style consists, then: first, in the habitual choice of subjects of thought which involve wide interests and profound passions,

[1] [Compare *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 55, where Ruskin says that when Turner fails, it is because he "set himself to excel himself" (Vol. XII. p. 385).]

as opposed to those which involve narrow interests and slight passions. The style is greater or less in exact proportion to the nobleness of the interests and passions involved in the subject. The habitual choice of sacred subjects, such as the Nativity, Transfiguration, Crucifixion (if the choice be sincere), implies that the painter has a natural disposition to dwell on the highest thoughts of which humanity is capable; it constitutes him so far forth a painter of the highest order, as, for instance, Leonardo, in his painting of the Last Supper: he who delights in representing the acts or meditations of great men, as, for instance, Raphael painting the School of Athens, is, so far forth, a painter of the second order: he who represents the passions and events of ordinary life, of the third. And in this ordinary life, he who represents deep thoughts and sorrows, as, for instance, Hunt, in his Claudio and Isabella,[1] and such other works, is of the highest rank in his sphere; and he who represents the slight malignities and passions of the drawing-room, as, for instance, Leslie, of the second rank; he who represents the sports of boys, or simplicities of clowns, as Webster or Teniers, of the third rank; and he who represents brutalities and vices (for delight in them, and not for rebuke of them), of no rank at all, or rather of a negative rank, holding a certain order in the abyss.

§ 6. The reader will, I hope, understand how much importance is to be attached to the sentence in the first parenthesis, "if the choice be sincere;" for choice of subject is, of course, only available as a criterion of the rank of the painter, when it is made from the heart. Indeed, in the lower orders of painting, the choice is always made from such a heart as the painter has; for his selection of the brawls of peasants or sports of children can, of course,

[1] [For Ruskin's notices of this picture by Holman Hunt (exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1853), see Vol. XII. p. 160; for his appreciation of C. R. Leslie's mastery "of the phases of such delicate expression on the human face as may be excited by the slight passions and humours of the drawing-room," *Academy Notes*, 1855 (supplement); and for a notice of Webster, *Academy Notes*, 1858 (No. 119). For Teniers, see General Index.]

proceed only from the fact that he has more sympathy with such brawls or pastimes than with nobler subjects. But the choice of the higher kind of subjects is often insincere, and may, therefore, afford no real criterion of the painter's rank. The greater number of men who have lately painted religious or heroic subjects have done so in mere ambition, because they had been taught that it was a good thing to be a "high art" painter; and the fact is that in nine cases out of ten, the so-called historical or "high art" painter is a person infinitely inferior to the painter of flowers or still life. He is, in modern times, nearly always a man who has great vanity without pictorial capacity, and differs from the landscape or fruit painter merely in misunderstanding and over-estimating his own powers. He mistakes his vanity for inspiration, his ambition for greatness of soul, and takes pleasure in what he calls "the ideal," merely because he has neither humility nor capacity enough to comprehend the real.

§ 7. But also observe, it is not enough even that the choice be sincere. It must also be wise. It happens very often that a man of weak intellect, sincerely desiring to do what is good and useful, will devote himself to high art subjects because he thinks them the only ones on which time and toil can be usefully spent, or, sometimes, because they are really the only ones he has pleasure in contemplating. But not having intellect enough to enter into the minds of truly great men, or to imagine great events as they really happened, he cannot become a great painter; he degrades the subjects he intended to honour, and his work is more utterly thrown away, and his rank as an artist in reality lower, than if he had devoted himself to the imitation of the simplest objects of natural history. The works of Overbeck are a most notable instance of this form of error.[1]

[1] [For a further criticism of Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789–1869), the leader of the modern religious movement in German art, see *Lectures on Landscape* (1871), § 83.]

§ 8. It must also be remembered, that in nearly all the great periods of art the choice of subject has not been left to the painter. His employer,—abbot, baron, or monarch,—determined for him whether he should earn his bread by making cloisters bright with choirs of saints, painting coats of arms on leaves of romances, or decorating presence chambers with complimentary mythology; and his own personal feelings are ascertainable only by watching, in the themes assigned to him, what are the points in which he seems to take most pleasure. Thus, in the prolonged ranges of varied subjects with which Benozzo Gozzoli decorated the cloisters of Pisa, it is easy to see that love of simple domestic incident, sweet landscape, and glittering ornament, prevails slightly over the solemn elements of religious feeling, which, nevertheless, the spirit of the age instilled into him in such measure as to form a very lovely and noble mind, though still one of the second order. In the work of Orcagna, an intense solemnity and energy in the sublimest groups of his figures, fading away as he touches inferior subjects, indicates that his home was among the archangels,[1] and his rank among the first of the sons of men; while Correggio, in the sidelong grace, artificial smiles, and purple languors of his saints, indicates the inferior instinct which would have guided his choice in quite other directions, had it not been for the fashion of the age, and the need of the day.[2]

§ 9. It will follow, of course, from the above considerations, that the choice which characterizes the school of high art is seen as much in the treatment of a subject as in its selection, and that the expression of the thoughts of the persons represented will always be the first thing considered by the painter who worthily enters that highest school.

[1] [For "Orcagna" ("archangel") see "Review of Lord Lindsay," § 53 (Vol. XII. p. 223).]

[2] [For the work of Gozzoli and Orcagna, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. *passim*, and the "Review of Lord Lindsay," Vol. XII. pp. 227, 229. For the place in the hierarchy of painters allotted by Ruskin to Correggio, see below, § 12, and Ruskin's letter to his father, in Vol. IV. pp. xxxiv.–xxxv.]

For the artist who sincerely chooses the noblest subject will also choose chiefly to represent what makes that subject noble, namely, the various heroism or other noble emotions of the persons represented. If, instead of this, the artist seeks only to make his picture agreeable by the composition of its masses and colours, or by any other merely pictorial merit, as fine drawing of limbs, it is evident, not only that any other subject would have answered his purpose as well, but that he is unfit to approach the subject he has chosen, because he cannot enter into its deepest meaning, and therefore cannot in reality have chosen it for that meaning. Nevertheless, while the expression is always to be the first thing considered, all other merits must be added to the utmost of the painter's power; for until he can both colour and draw beautifully he has no business to consider himself a painter at all, far less to attempt the noblest subjects of painting;[1] and, when he has once possessed himself of these powers, he will naturally and fitly employ them to deepen and perfect the impression made by the sentiment of his subject.

The perfect unison of expression, as the painter's main purpose, with the full and natural exertion of his pictorial power in the details of the work, is found only in the old Pre-Raphaelite periods, and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school. In the works of Giotto, Angelico, Orcagna, John Bellini, and one or two more, these two conditions of high art are entirely fulfilled, so far as the knowledge of those days enabled them to be fulfilled; and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school they are fulfilled nearly to the uttermost. Hunt's Light of the World, is, I believe, the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power, which the world has yet produced.[2]

§ 10. Now in the Post-Raphaelite period of ancient art,

[1] [This is a point frequently enforced by Ruskin (see, *e.g.*, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 24), but also frequently ignored in criticisms of him and sometimes (as he says) by disciples (see *Cestus of Aglaia*, § 59).]

[2] [For Ruskin's detailed notice of this picture, see Vol. XII. pp. 328–331; see also below, Appendix iii., p. 429.]

and in the spurious high art of modern times, two broad forms of error divide the schools; the one consisting in (A) the superseding of expression by technical excellence, and the other in (B) the superseding of technical excellence by expression.

(A.) Superseding expression by technical excellence.—This takes place most frankly, and therefore most innocently, in the work of the Venetians. They very nearly ignore expression altogether, directing their aim exclusively to the rendering of external truths of colour and form. Paul Veronese will make the Magdalene wash the feet of Christ with a countenance as absolutely unmoved as that of any ordinary servant bringing a ewer to her master, and will introduce the supper at Emmaus as a background to the portraits of two children playing with a dog. Of the wrongness or rightness of such a proceeding we shall reason in another place;[1] at present we have to note it merely as displacing the Venetian work from the highest or expressional rank of art. But the error is generally made in a more subtle and dangerous way. The artist deceives himself into the idea that he is doing all he can to elevate his subject by treating it under rules of art, introducing into it accurate science, and collecting for it the beauties of (so called) ideal form; whereas he may, in reality, be all the while sacrificing his subject to his own vanity or pleasure, and losing truth, nobleness, and impressiveness for the sake of delightful lines or creditable pedantries.

§ 11. (B.) Superseding technical excellence by expression.—This is usually done under the influence of another kind of vanity. The artist desires that men should think he has an elevated soul, affects to despise the ordinary excellence of art, contemplates with separated egotism the course of his own imaginations or sensations, and refuses to look at the real facts round about him, in order that he may adore at

[1] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vi. § 18; and for the two pictures by Veronese above referred to, see the "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. pp. 451, 452; and compare ch. ii. § 5, above, p. 38; and below, ch. iv. § 24, p. 89.]

leisure the shadow of himself. He lives in an element of what he calls tender emotions and lofty aspirations; which are, in fact, nothing more than very ordinary weaknesses or instincts, contemplated through a mist of pride. A large range of modern German art comes under this head.[1]

A more interesting and respectable form of this error is fallen into by some truly earnest men, who, finding their powers not adequate to the attainment of great artistical excellence, but adequate to rendering, up to a certain point, the expression of the human countenance, devote themselves to that object alone, abandoning effort in other directions, and executing the accessories of their pictures feebly or carelessly. With these are associated another group of philosophical painters, who suppose the artistical merits of other parts *adverse* to the expression, as drawing the spectator's attention away from it, and who paint in grey colour, and imperfect light and shade, by way of enforcing the purity of their conceptions. Both these classes of conscientious but narrow-minded artists labour under the same grievous mistake of imagining that wilful fallacy can ever be either pardonable or helpful. They forget that colour, if used at all, must be either true or false, and that what *they* call chastity, dignity, and reserve is, to the eye of any person accustomed to nature, pure, bold, and impertinent falsehood. It does not in the eyes of any soundly minded man, exalt the expression of a female face that the cheeks should be painted of the colour of clay, nor does it in the least enhance his reverence for a saint to find the scenery around him deprived, by his presence, of sunshine. It is an important consolation, however, to reflect that no artist ever fell into any of these last three errors (under head B) who had really the capacity of becoming a great painter. No man ever despised colour who could produce it; and the error of these sentimentalists and philosophers is not so much in the choice of their manner of painting, as in supposing themselves capable of painting at all. Some of them might have

[1] [For Ruskin on German art, see below, Appendix ii., p. 424.]

made efficient sculptors, but the greater number had their mission in some other sphere than that of art, and would have found, in works of practical charity, better employment for their gentleness and sentimentalism, than in denying to human beauty its colour, and to natural scenery its light; in depriving heaven of its blue, and earth of its bloom, valour of its glow, and modesty of its blush.

§ 12. II. Love of Beauty.[1]—The second characteristic of the great school of art is, that it introduces in the conception of its subject as much beauty as is possible, consistently with truth.*

* As here, for the first time, I am obliged to use the terms Truth and Beauty in a kind of opposition, I must therefore stop for a moment to state clearly the relation of these two qualities of art; and to protest against the vulgar and foolish habit of confusing truth and beauty with each other. People with shallow powers of thought, desiring to flatter themselves with the sensation of having attained profundity, are continually doing the most serious mischief by introducing confusion into plain matters, and then valuing themselves on being confounded.[2] Nothing is more common than to hear people who desire to be thought philosophical, declare that "beauty is truth," and "truth is beauty." I would most earnestly beg every sensible person who hears such an assertion made, to nip the germinating philosopher in his ambiguous bud; and beg him, if he really believes his own assertion, never henceforward to use two words for the same thing. The fact is, truth and beauty are entirely distinct, though often related, things. One is a property of statements, the other of objects. The statement that "two and two make four" is true, but it is neither beautiful nor ugly, for it is invisible; a rose is lovely, but it is neither true nor false, for it is silent. That which shows nothing cannot be fair, and that which asserts nothing cannot be false. Even the ordinary use of the words false and true, as applied to artificial and real things, is inaccurate. An artificial rose is not a "false" rose, it is not a rose at all. The falseness is in the person who states, or induces the belief, that it *is* a rose.

Now, therefore, in things concerning art, the words true and false are only to be rightly used while the picture is considered as a statement of facts. The painter asserts that this which he has painted is the form of a dog, a man, or a tree. If it be *not* the form of a dog, a man, or a tree, the painter's statement is false; and, therefore, we justly speak of a false line, or false colour; not that any lines or colours can in themselves be

[1] [In his copy for revision, Ruskin marked the following passage with special approval, making the note "Greatly valuable. Insist on." So, again, he marked § 17 as "Essential"; § 19 "Magnitude—most valuable"; § 20 was also marked as specially important.]

[2] [Compare Vol. IV. p. 66.]

For instance, in any subject consisting of a number of figures, it will make as many of those figures beautiful as the faithful representation of humanity will admit. It will not deny the facts of ugliness or decrepitude, or relative inferiority and superiority of feature as necessarily manifested in a crowd, but it will, so far as it is in its power, seek for and dwell upon the fairest forms, and in all things insist on the beauty that is in them, not on the ugliness. In this respect, schools of art become higher in exact proportion to the degree in which they apprehend and love the beautiful. Thus, Angelico, intensely loving all spiritual beauty, will be of the highest rank;[1] and Paul Veronese and Correggio, intensely loving physical and corporeal beauty, of the second rank; and Albert Dürer, Rubens, and in general the Northern artists, apparently insensible to beauty, and caring only for truth, whether shapely or not, of the third rank; and Teniers and Salvator, Caravaggio, and other such worshippers of the depraved, of no rank, or as we said before,[2] of a certain order in the abyss.

§ 13. The corruption of the schools of high art, so far as

false, but they become so when they convey a statement that they resemble something which they do *not* resemble. But the beauty of the lines or colours is wholly independent of any such statement. They may be beautiful lines, though quite inaccurate, and ugly lines though quite faithful. A picture may be frightfully ugly, which represents with fidelity some base circumstance of daily life; and a painted window may be exquisitely beautiful, which represents men with eagles' faces, and dogs with blue heads and crimson tails (though, by the way, this is not in the strict sense *false* art, as we shall see hereafter, inasmuch as it means no assertion that men ever *had* eagles' faces). If this were not so, it would be impossible to sacrifice truth to beauty; for to attain the one would always be to attain the other. But, unfortunately, this sacrifice is exceedingly possible, and it is chiefly this which characterizes the false schools of high art, so far as high art consists in the pursuit of beauty. For although truth and beauty are independent of each other, it does not follow that we are at liberty to pursue whichever we please. They are indeed separable, but it is wrong to separate them; they are to be sought together in the order of their worthiness; that is to say, truth first, and beauty afterwards. High art differs from low art in possessing an excess of beauty in addition to its truth, not in possessing excess of beauty inconsistent with truth.

[1] [See the "Review of Lord Lindsay," §§ 44, 66 (Vol. XII. pp. 212, 236).]
[2] [Above, § 5, p. 49.]

this particular quality is concerned, consists in the sacrifice of truth to beauty. Great art dwells on all that is beautiful; but false art omits or changes all that is ugly. Great art accepts Nature as she is, but directs the eyes and thoughts to what is most perfect in her; false art saves itself the trouble of direction by removing or altering whatever it thinks objectionable. The evil results of which proceeding are twofold.

Evil first, that we lose the true force of beauty.

§ 14. First. That beauty deprived of its proper foils and adjuncts ceases to be enjoyed as beauty, just as light deprived of all shadow ceases to be enjoyed as light. A white canvas cannot produce an effect of sunshine; the painter must darken it in some places before he can make it look luminous in others; nor can an uninterrupted succession of beauty produce the true effect of beauty; it must be foiled by inferiority before its own power can be developed. Nature has for the most part mingled her inferior and noble elements as she mingles sunshine with shade, giving due use and influence to both, and the painter who chooses to remove the shadow, perishes in the burning desert he has created. The truly high and beautiful art of Angelico is continually refreshed and strengthened by his frank portraiture of the most ordinary features of his brother monks and of the recorded peculiarities of ungainly sanctity; but the modern German and Raphaelesque schools lose all honour and nobleness in barber-like admiration of handsome faces, and have, in fact, no real faith except in straight noses, and curled hair. Paul Veronese opposes the dwarf to the soldier,[1] and the negress to the queen; Shakspeare places Caliban beside Miranda, and Autolycus beside Perdita;[2] but the vulgar idealist withdraws his beauty to the safety of the saloon, and his innocence to the seclusion of the cloister; he pretends that he does this in delicacy of choice and purity of sentiment,

[1] [In his picture of "The Family of Darius" in the National Gallery; compare ch. vii. § 2, below, p. 112.]

[2] [On Caliban and Miranda, see also *Lectures on Art*, § 81, and *Munera Pulveris*, §§ 133–134. For Ruskin's analysis of the *Tempest*, see *Munera*, *l.c.*, and *Time and Tide*, § 167.]

while in truth he has neither courage to front the monster, nor wit enough to furnish the knave.

Evil second,—we lose the true quantity of beauty.

§ 15. It is only by the habit of representing faithfully all things, that we can truly learn what is beautiful, and what is not. The ugliest objects contain some element of beauty; and in all it is an element peculiar to themselves, which cannot be separated from their ugliness, but must either be enjoyed together with it or not at all. The more a painter accepts nature as he finds it, the more unexpected beauty he discovers in what he at first despised; but once let him arrogate the right of rejection, and he will gradually contract his circle of enjoyment, until what he supposed to be nobleness of selection ends in narrowness of perception. Dwelling perpetually upon one class of ideas, his art becomes at once monstrous and morbid; until at last he cannot faithfully represent even what he chooses to retain; his discrimination contracts into darkness, and his fastidiousness fades into fatuity.

High art, therefore, consists neither in altering, nor in improving nature; but in seeking throughout nature for "whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are pure";[1] in loving these, in displaying to the utmost of the painter's power such loveliness as is in them, and directing the thoughts of others to them by winning art or gentle emphasis. Of the degree in which this can be done, and in which it may be permitted to gather together, without falsifying, the finest forms or thoughts, so as to create a sort of perfect vision, we shall have to speak hereafter: at present, it is enough to remember that art (*cæteris paribus*) is great in exact proportion to the love of beauty shown by the painter, provided that love of beauty forfeit no atom of truth.

§ 16. III. Sincerity.—The next* characteristic of great

* I name them in order of *in*creasing, not decreasing importance.

[1] [Philippians iv. 8.]

art is that it includes the largest possible quantity of Truth in the most perfect possible harmony. If it were possible for art to give all the truths of nature it ought to do it. But this is not possible. Choice must always be made of some facts which *can* be represented, from among others which must be passed by in silence, or even, in some respects, misrepresented. The inferior artist chooses unimportant and scattered truths; the great artist chooses the most necessary first, and afterwards the most consistent with these, so as to obtain the greatest possible and most harmonious *sum*. For instance, Rembrandt always chooses to represent the exact force with which the light on the most illumined part of an object is opposed to its obscurer portions. In order to obtain this, in most cases, not very important truth, he sacrifices the light and colour of five-sixths of his picture, and the expression of every character of objects which depends on tenderness of shape or tint. But he obtains his single truth, and what picturesque and forcible expression is dependent upon it, with magnificent skill and subtlety. Veronese, on the contrary, chooses to represent the great relations of visible things to each other, to the heaven above, and to the earth beneath[1] them. He holds it more important to show how a figure stands relieved from delicate air, or marble wall; how as a red, or purple, or white figure, it separates itself, in clear discernibility, from things not red, nor purple, nor white; how infinite daylight shines round it; how innumerable veils of faint shadow invest it; how its blackness and darkness are, in the excess of their nature, just as limited and local as its intensity of light; all this, I say, he feels to be more important than showing merely the exact *measure* of the spark of sunshine that gleams on a dagger-hilt, or glows on a jewel. All this, moreover, he feels to be harmonious, —capable of being joined in one great system of spacious truth. And with inevitable watchfulness, inestimable subtlety, he unites all this in tenderest balance, noting in each

[1] [Exodus xx. 4.]

hair's-breadth of colour, not merely what its rightness or wrongness is in itself, but what its relation is to every other on his canvas; restraining, for truth's sake, his exhaustless energy, reining back, for truth's sake, his fiery strength; veiling, before truth, the vanity of brightness; penetrating, for truth, the discouragement of gloom; ruling his restless invention with a rod of iron; pardoning no error, no thoughtlessness, no forgetfulness; and subduing all his powers, impulses, and imaginations, to the arbitrament of a merciless justice, and the obedience of an incorruptible verity.

I give this instance with respect to colour and shade: but, in the whole field of art, the difference between the great and inferior artists is of the same kind, and may be determined at once by the question, which of them conveys the largest sum of truth?

Corollary 1st: Great art is generally distinct.

§ 17. It follows from this principle, that in general all *great* drawing is *distinct* drawing; for truths which are rendered indistinctly might, for the most part, as well not be rendered at all. There are, indeed, certain facts of mystery, and facts of indistinctness, in all objects, which must have their proper place in the general harmony, and the reader will presently find me, when we come to that part of our investigation, telling him that all good drawing must in some sort be *in*distinct.[1] We may, however, understand this apparent contradiction, by reflecting that the highest knowledge always involves a more advanced perception of the fields of the unknown; and, therefore, it may most truly be said, that to know anything well involves a profound sensation of ignorance, while yet it is equally true that good and noble knowledge is distinguished from vain and useless knowledge chiefly by its clearness and distinctness, and by the vigorous consciousness of what is known and what is not.

So in art. The best drawing involves a wonderful perception and expression of indistinctness; and yet all noble drawing is separated from the ignoble by its distinctness,

[1] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iv. § 1 ("Of Turnerian Mystery").]

by its fine expression and firm assertion of *Something;* whereas the bad drawing, without either firmness or fineness, expresses and asserts *Nothing.* The first thing, therefore, to be looked for as a sign of noble art, is a clear consciousness of what is drawn and what is not; the bold statement, and frank confession—"*This* I know," "*that* I know not"; and, generally speaking, all haste, slurring, obscurity, indecision, are signs of low art, and all calmness, distinctness, luminousness, and positiveness, of high art.

Corollary 2nd: Great art is generally large in masses and in scale.

§ 18. It follows, secondly, from this principle, that as the great painter is always attending to the sum and harmony of his truths rather than to one or the other of any group, a quality of Grasp is visible in his work, like the power of a great reasoner over his subject, or a great poet over his conception, manifesting itself very often in missing out certain details or less truths (which, though good in themselves, he finds are in the way of others), and in a sweeping manner of getting the beginnings and ends of things shown at once, and the squares and depths rather than the surfaces: hence, on the whole, a habit of looking at large masses rather than small ones; and even a physical largeness of handling, and love of working, if possible, on a large scale;[1] and various other qualities, more or less imperfectly expressed by such technical terms as breadth, massing, unity, boldness, etc., all of which are, indeed, great qualities, when they mean breadth of truth, weight of truth, unity of truth, and courageous assertion of truth; but which have all their correlative errors and mockeries, almost universally mistaken for them,—the breadth which has no contents, the weight which has no value, the unity which plots deception, and the boldness which faces out fallacy.

§ 19. And it is to be noted especially respecting largeness of scale, that though for the most part it is characteristic of the more powerful masters, they having both more invention wherewith to fill space (as Ghirlandajo wished

[1] [See further on this subject, Appendix v., pp. 433–436.]

that he might paint all the walls of Florence),[1] and, often, an impetuosity of mind which makes them like free play for hand and arm (besides that they usually desire to paint everything in the foreground of their picture of the natural size), yet, as this largeness of scale involves the placing of the picture at a considerable distance from the eye, and this distance involves the loss of many delicate details, and especially of the subtle lines of expression in features, it follows that the masters of refined detail and human expression are apt to prefer a small scale to work upon; so that the chief masterpieces of expression which the world possesses are small pictures by Angelico, in which the figures are rarely more than six or seven inches high;[2] in the best works of Raphael and Leonardo the figures are almost always less than life, and the best works of Turner do not exceed the size of 18 inches by 12.

Corollary 3rd: Great art is always delicate.

§ 20. As its greatness depends on the sum of truth, and this sum of truth can always be increased by delicacy of handling, it follows that all great art must have this delicacy to the utmost possible degree. This rule is infallible and inflexible. All coarse work is the sign of low art. Only, it is to be remembered, that coarseness must be estimated by the distance from the eye; it being necessary to consult this distance, when great, by laying on touches which appear coarse when seen near; but which, so far from being coarse, are, in reality, more delicate in a master's work than the finest close handling, for they involve a calculation of result, and are laid on with a subtlety of sense precisely correspondent to that with which a good archer draws his bow; the spectator seeing in the

[1] ["When household cares were laid upon him, he complained bitterly, and committed the charge of all expenditure to his brother David, saying to him, 'Leave me to work, and do thou provide, for now that I have begun to get into the spirit and comprehend the method of this art, I grudge that they do not commission me to paint the whole circuit of the walls of Florence with stories" (Vasari's *Lives*, ii. 215, Bohn's ed., 1855).]

[2] [For the comparative failure of Angelico's larger works, see the "Review of Lord Lindsay," Vol. XII. p. 235; the following statement in the text here expresses the opinion often given by Ruskin that Turner's greatest works are his water-colours (see, for instance, *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, 1856).]

action nothing but the strain of the strong arm, while there is in reality, in the finger and eye, an ineffably delicate estimate of distance, and touch on the arrow plume. And, indeed, this delicacy is generally quite perceptible to those who know what the truth is, for strokes by Tintoret or Paul Veronese, which were done in an instant, and look to an ignorant spectator merely like a violent dash of loaded colour (and are, as such, imitated by blundering artists), are, in fact, modulated by the brush and finger to that degree of delicacy that no single grain of the colour could be taken from the touch without injury; and little golden particles of it, not the size of a gnat's head, have important share and function in the balances of light in a picture perhaps fifty feet long.[1] Nearly *every* other rule applicable to art has some exception but this. This has absolutely none. All great art is delicate art, and all coarse art is bad art.[2] Nay, even, to a certain extent, all *bold* art is bad art; for boldness is not the proper word to apply to the courage and swiftness of a great master, based on knowledge, and coupled with fear and love. There is as much difference between the boldness of the true and the false masters, as there is between the courage of a sure woman and the shamelessness of a lost one.

§ 21. IV. Invention.—The last characteristic of great art is that it must be inventive, that is, be produced by the imagination. In this respect, it must precisely fulfil the definition already given of poetry;[3] and not only present grounds for noble emotion, but furnish these grounds by *imaginative power*. Hence there is at once a great bar fixed between the two schools of Lower and Higher art. The lower merely copies what is set before it, whether in portrait, landscape, or still-life; the higher either entirely imagines its subject, or arranges the materials presented to it, so as to manifest the imaginative power in all the three phases which have been already explained in the second volume.

[1] [On this subject, compare *The Two Paths*, Appendix iv. ("Subtlety of Hand").]
[2] [Compare *Elements of Drawing*, preface, § 7, where this rule is again enforced.]
[3] [Above, p. 28.]

And this was the truth which was confusedly present in Reynolds's mind when he spoke, as above quoted,[1] of the difference between Historical and Poetical Painting. *Every relation of the plain facts which the painter saw* is proper *historical* painting.* If those facts are unimportant (as that he saw a gambler quarrel with another gambler, or a sot enjoying himself with another sot), then the history is trivial; if the facts are important (as that he saw such and such a great man look thus, or act thus, at such a time), then the history is noble: in each case perfect truth of narrative being supposed, otherwise the whole thing is worthless, being neither history nor poetry, but plain falsehood. And farther, as greater or less elegance and precision are manifested in the relation or painting of the incidents, the merit of the work varies; so that, what with difference of subject, and what with difference of treatment, historical painting falls or rises in changeful eminence, from Dutch trivialities to a Velasquez portrait, just as historical talking or writing varies in eminence, from an old woman's story-telling up to Herodotus. Besides which, certain operations of the imagination come into play inevitably, here and there, so as to touch the history with some light of poetry, that is, with some light shot forth of the narrator's mind, or brought out by the way he has put the accidents together: and wherever the imagination has thus had anything to do with the matter at all (and it must be somewhat cold work where it has not), then, the confines of the lower and higher schools touching each other, the work is coloured by both; but there is no reason why, therefore, we should in the least confuse the historical and poetical characters, any more than that we should confuse blue with crimson, because they may overlap each other, and produce purple.

§ 22. Now, historical or simply narrative art is very

* Compare my Edinburgh Lectures, lecture iv. p. 218 *et seq.* (2nd edition).[2]

[1] [Above, p. 21.]
[2] [In this edition, Vol. XII. pp. 151–153.]

precious in its proper place and way, but it is never *great* art until the poetical or imaginative power touches it; and in proportion to the stronger manifestation of this power, it becomes greater and greater, while the highest art is purely imaginative, all its materials being wrought into their form by invention; and it differs, therefore, from the simple historical painting, exactly as Wordsworth's stanza, above quoted,[1] differs from Saussure's plain narrative of the parallel fact; and the imaginative painter differs from the historical painter in the manner that Wordsworth differs from Saussure.

§ 23. Farther, imaginative art always *includes* historical art; so that, strictly speaking, according to the analogy above used, we meet with the pure blue, and with the crimson ruling the blue and changing it into kingly purple, but not with the pure crimson: for all imagination must deal with the knowledge it has before accumulated; it never produces anything but by combination or contemplation. Creation, in the full sense, is impossible to it. And the mode in which the historical faculties are included by it is often quite simple, and easily seen. Thus, in Hunt's great poetical picture of the Light of the World, the whole thought and arrangement of the picture being imaginative, the several details of it are wrought out with simple portraiture; the ivy, the jewels, the creeping plants, and the moonlight being calmly studied or remembered from the things themselves. But of all these special ways in which the invention works with plain facts, we shall have to treat farther afterwards.[2]

§ 24. And now, finally, since this poetical power includes the historical, if we glance back to the other qualities required in great art, and put all together, we find that the sum of them is simply the sum of all the powers of man. For as (1) the choice of the high subject involves all conditions of right moral choice, and as (2) the love of beauty

[1] [Above, p. 29.]
[2] [See below, ch. vii.]

involves all conditions of right admiration, and as (3) the grasp of truth involves all strength of sense, evenness of judgment, and honesty of purpose, and as (4) the poetical power involves all swiftness of invention, and accuracy of historical memory, the sum of all these powers is the sum of the human soul. Hence we see why the word "Great" is used of this art. It is literally great. It compasses and calls forth the entire human spirit, whereas any other kind of art, being more or less small or narrow, compasses and calls forth only *part* of the human spirit. Hence the idea of its magnitude is a literal and just one, the art being simply less or greater in proportion to the number of faculties it exercises and addresses.* And this is the ultimate meaning of the definition I gave of it long ago, as containing the "greatest number of the greatest ideas."[1]

§ 25. Such, then, being the characters required in order to constitute high art, if the reader will think over them a little, and over the various ways in which they may be falsely assumed, he will easily perceive how spacious and dangerous a field of discussion they open to the ambitious critic, and of error to the ambitious artist; he will see how difficult it must be, either to distinguish what is truly great art from the mockeries of it, or to rank the real artists in anything like a progressive system of greater and less. For it will have been observed that the various qualities which form greatness are partly inconsistent with each other (as some virtues are, docility and firmness for instance), and partly independent of each other; and the fact is, that artists differ not more by mere capacity, than by the component *elements* of their capacity, each possessing in very different proportions the several attributes of greatness; so that, classed by one kind of merit, as, for instance, purity of expression, Angelico will stand highest;

* Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. chap. iv. § 7 and § 21.[2]

[1] [*Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 92).]
[2] [Vol. XI. pp. 203, 213.]

classed by another, sincerity of manner, Veronese will stand highest; classed by another, love of beauty, Leonardo[1] will stand highest; and so on:[2] hence arise continual disputes and misunderstandings among those who think that high art must always be one and the same, and that great artists ought to unite all great attributes in an equal degree.

§ 26. In one of the exquisitely finished tales of Marmontel, a company of critics are received at dinner by the hero of the story, an old gentleman, somewhat vain of his *acquired* taste, and his niece, by whose incorrigible *natural* taste he is seriously disturbed and tormented. During the entertainment, "On parcourut tous les genres de littérature, et pour donner plus d'essor à l'érudition et à la critique, on mit sur le tapis cette question toute neuve, sçavoir, lequel méritoit la préférence de Corneille ou de Racine. L'on disoit même là-dessus les plus belles choses du monde, lorsque la petite nièce, qui n'avoit pas dit un mot, s'avisa de demander naïvement lequel des deux fruits, de l'orange ou de la pêche, avoit le goût le plus exquis et méritoit le plus d'éloges. Son oncle rougit de sa simplicité, et les convives baissèrent tous les yeux sans daigner répondre à cette bêtise. Ma nièce, dit Fintac, à votre âge, il faut sçavoir écouter, et se taire."[3]

I cannot close this chapter with shorter or better advice to the reader, than merely, whenever he hears discussions about the relative merits of great masters, to remember the young lady's question. It is, indeed, true that there *is* a relative merit, that a peach is nobler than a hawthorn berry, and still more a hawthorn berry than a bead of the nightshade; but in each rank of fruits, as in each rank of

[1] [In his copy for revision, Ruskin in later years struck out "Leonardo" and wrote "Luini." Luini was one of his later favourites: see below, p. 87 *n.*]

[2] [For one other such classification, see the letter of Ruskin quoted in Vol. IV. p. xxxv.]

[3] [This passage from "The Connoisseur" will be found at p. 213 of Mr. G. Saintsbury's edition of *Marmontel's Moral Tales* (1895). For an earlier quotation from Marmontel, see Vol. III. p. 166 and *n.*]

masters, one is endowed with one virtue, and another with another; their glory is their dissimilarity, and they who propose to themselves in the training of an artist that he should unite the colouring of Tintoret, the finish of Albert Dürer, and the tenderness of Correggio, are no wiser than a horticulturist would be, who made it the object of his labour to produce a fruit which should unite in itself the lusciousness of the grape, the crispness of the nut, and the fragrance of the pine.

§ 27. And from these considerations one most important practical corollary is to be deduced, with the good help of Mademoiselle Agathe's simile, namely, that the greatness or smallness of a man is, in the most conclusive sense, determined for him at his birth, as strictly as it is determined for a fruit whether it is to be a currant or an apricot. Education, favourable circumstances, resolution, and industry can do much; in a certain sense they do *everything;* that is to say, they determine whether the poor apricot shall fall in the form of a green bead, blighted by the east wind, and be trodden under foot, or whether it shall expand into tender pride, and sweet brightness of golden velvet.[1] But apricot out of currant,—great man out of small,—did never yet art or effort make; and, in a general way, men have their excellence nearly fixed for them when they are born; a little cramped and frost-bitten on one side, a little sun-burnt and fortune-spotted on the other, they reach, between good and evil chances, such size and taste as generally belong to the men of their calibre, and, the small in their serviceable bunches, the great in their golden isolation, have, these no cause for regret, nor those for disdain.

§ 28. Therefore it is, that every system of teaching is false which holds forth "great art" as in any wise to be taught to students, or even to be aimed at by them.

[1] [The MS. here supplies a good instance of the felicities which often occurred to Ruskin in revising. He had first written "expand into tender pride, and win prizes at garden shows."]

Great art is precisely that which never was, nor will be taught,[1] it is pre-eminently and finally the expression of the spirits of great men; so that the only wholesome teaching is that which simply endeavours to fix those characters of nobleness in the pupil's mind, of which it seems easily susceptible; and without holding out to him, as a possible or even probable result, that he should ever paint like Titian, or carve like Michael Angelo, enforces upon him the manifest possibility, and assured duty, of endeavouring to draw in a manner at least honest and intelligible; and cultivates in him those general charities of heart, sincerities of thought, and graces of habit which are likely to lead him, throughout life, to prefer openness to affectation, realities to shadows, and beauty to corruption.

[1] [Compare what is said in *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 16, about imagination and invention being unteachable (Vol. XII. p. 352.]

CHAPTER IV

OF THE FALSE IDEAL:—FIRST, RELIGIOUS[1]

§ 1. HAVING now gained some general notion of the meaning of "great art," we may, without risk of confusing ourselves, take up the questions suggested incidentally in the preceding chapter, and pursue them at leisure. Of these, two principal ones are closely connected with each other, to wit, that put in the 12th paragraph—How may beauty be sought in defiance of truth? and that in the 23rd paragraph—How does the imagination show itself in dealing with truth? These two, therefore, which are, besides, the most important of all, and, if well answered, will answer many others inclusively, we shall find it most convenient to deal with at once.

§ 2. The pursuit, by the imagination, of beautiful and strange thoughts or subjects, to the exclusion of painful or common ones, is called among us, in these modern days, the pursuit of "*the ideal*"; nor does any subject deserve more attentive examination than the manner in which this pursuit is entered upon by the modern mind. The reader must pardon me for making in the outset one or two statements which may appear to him somewhat wide of the matter, but which, (if he admits their truth,) he will, I think, presently perceive to reach to the root of it. Namely,

That men's proper business in this world falls mainly into three divisions:[2]

[1] [In his copy for revision, Ruskin wrote here "Give all this chapter as root of Pre-Raphaelitism."]

[2] [Compare Vol. XI. p. 258, for a similar statement in connexion with principles of education.]

First, to know themselves, and the existing state of the things they have to do with.

Secondly, to be happy in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to mend themselves, and the existing state of things, as far as either are marred and mendable.

These, I say, are the three plain divisions of proper human business on this earth. For these three, the following are usually substituted and adopted by human creatures:

First, to be totally ignorant of themselves, and the existing state of things.

Secondly, to be miserable in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to let themselves, and the existing state of things, alone (at least, in the way of correction).

§ 3. The dispositions which induce us to manage, thus wisely, the affairs of this life seem to be:

First, a fear of disagreeable facts, and conscious shrinking from clearness of light, which keep us from examining ourselves, and increase gradually into a species of instinctive terror at all truth, and love of glosses, veils, and decorative lies of every sort.

Secondly, a general readiness to take delight in anything past, future, far off, or somewhere else, rather than in things now, near, and here; leading us gradually to place our pleasure principally in the exercise of the imagination, and to build all our satisfaction on things as they are *not*. Which power being one not accorded to the lower animals, and having indeed, when disciplined, a very noble use, we pride ourselves upon it, whether disciplined or not, and pass our lives complacently, in substantial discontent, and visionary satisfaction.

§ 4. Now *nearly* all artistical and poetical seeking after the ideal is only one branch of this base habit—the abuse of the imagination in allowing it to find its whole delight in the impossible and untrue; while the faithful pursuit of

the ideal is an honest use of the imagination, giving full power and presence to the possible and true.

It is the difference between these two uses of it which we have to examine.

§ 5. And, first, consider what are the legitimate uses of the imagination, that is to say, of the power of perceiving, or conceiving with the mind, things which cannot be perceived by the senses.

Its first and noblest use is,[1] to enable us to bring sensibly to our sight the things which are recorded as belonging to our future state, or as invisibly surrounding us in this.[2] It is given us, that we may imagine the cloud of witnesses[3] in heaven and earth, and see, as if they were now present, the souls of the righteous waiting for us; that we may conceive the great army of the inhabitants of heaven, and discover among them those whom we most desire to be with for ever; that we may be able to vision forth the ministry of angels beside us, and see the chariots of fire on the mountains that gird us round; but, above all, to call up the scenes and facts in which we are commanded to believe, and be present, as if in the body, at every recorded event of the history of the Redeemer. Its second and ordinary use is to empower us to traverse the scenes of all other history, and force the facts to become again visible, so as to make upon us the same impression which they would have made if we had witnessed them: and in the minor necessities of life, to enable us, out of any present good, to gather the utmost measure of enjoyment by investing it with happy associations, and, in any present evil, to lighten

[1] [In his copy for revision, Ruskin alters this to "has hitherto been."]

[2] [As already stated (above, p. 41 *n.*), § 5 here is § 9 in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following note:—

> "I should be glad if the reader who is interested in the question here raised, would read, as illustrative of the subsequent statement, the account of Tintoret's 'Paradise,' in the close of my Oxford lecture on Michael Angelo and Tintoret, which I have printed separately to make it generally accessible."

The lecture was afterwards incorporated in *Aratra Pentelici*: see §§ 241–243.]

[3] [Hebrews xii. 1. Other expressions in § 5 are from Wisdom iii. 1; Isaiah lxvi. 15.]

it, by summoning back the images of other hours; and, also, to give to all mental truths some visible type in allegory, simile, or personification, which shall more deeply enforce them; and finally, when the mind is utterly outwearied, to refresh it with such innocent play as shall be most in harmony with the suggestive voices of natural things, permitting it to possess living companionship instead of silent beauty, and create for itself fairies in the grass and naiads in the wave.

§ 6. These being the uses of imagination, its abuses are either in creating, for mere pleasure, false images, where it is its *duty* to create true ones; or in turning what was intended for the mere refreshment of the heart into its daily food, and changing the innocent pastime of an hour into the guilty occupation of a life.

Let us examine the principal forms of this misuse, one by one.

§ 7. First, then, the imagination is chiefly warped and dishonoured by being allowed to create false images, where it is its duty to create true ones. And this most dangerously in matters of religion. For a long time when art was in its infancy, it remained unexposed to this danger, because it could not, with any power, realize or create *any* thing. It consisted merely in simple outlines and pleasant colours, which were understood to be nothing more than signs of the thing thought of, a sort of pictorial letter for it, no more pretending to represent it than the written characters of its name. Such art excited the imagination, while it pleased the eye. But it *asserted* nothing, for it could realize nothing. The reader glanced at it as a glittering symbol, and went on to form truer images for himself. This act of the mind may be still seen in daily operation in children, as they look at brightly coloured pictures in their story-books. Such pictures neither deceive them nor satisfy them; they only set their own inventive powers to work in the directions required.

§ 8. But as soon as art obtained the power of realization,

it obtained also that of *assertion*. As fast as the painter advanced in skill he gained also in credibility, and that which he perfectly represented was perfectly believed, or could be disbelieved only by an actual effort of the beholder to escape from the fascinating deception. What had been faintly declared, might be painlessly denied; but it was difficult to discredit things forcibly alleged; and representations, which had been innocent in discrepancy, became guilty in consistency.

Fig. 1

§ 9. For instance, when in the thirteenth century, the Nativity was habitually represented by such a symbol as that on this page, Fig. 1, there was not the smallest possibility that such a picture could disturb, in the mind of the reader of the New Testament, the simple meaning of the words[1] "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger." That this manger was typified by a trefoil arch * would no more prevent his distinct understanding of the narrative, than the grotesque heads introduced above it would interfere with his firm comprehension of the words "ox" or "ass"; while if there were anything in the action of the principal

* The curious inequality of the little trefoil is not a mistake; it is faithfully copied by the draughtsman from the MS. Perhaps the actual date of the

[1] [Luke ii. 7.]

figures suggestive of real feeling, that suggestion he would accept, together with the general pleasantness of the lines and colours in the decorative letter; but without having his faith in the unrepresented and actual scene obscured for a moment. But it was far otherwise when Francia or Perugino, with exquisite power of representing the human form, and high knowledge of the mysteries of art, devoted all their skill to the delineation of an impossible scene; and painted, for their subjects of the Nativity, a beautiful and queenly lady, her dress embroidered with gold, and with a crown of jewels upon her hair, kneeling, on a floor of inlaid and precious marble, before a crowned child, laid under a portico of Lombardic * architecture; with a sweet, verdurous, and vivid landscape in the distance, full of winding rivers, village spires, and baronial towers.† It is quite true that the frank absurdity of the thought prevented its being received as a deliberate contradiction of the truths of Scripture; but it is no less certain, that the continual presentment to the mind of this beautiful and fully realized imagery more and more chilled its power of apprehending the real truth; and that when pictures of this description met the eye in every corner of every chapel, it was physically impossible to dwell distinctly upon facts the direct reverse of those represented. The word "Virgin" or "Madonna," instead of calling up the vision of a simple Jewish girl, bearing the calamities of poverty, and the dishonours of inferior station, summoned instantly the idea of a graceful princess, crowned with gems, and surrounded by obsequious ministry of kings and saints. The fallacy which was presented to the imagination was

illumination may be a year or two past the thirteenth century, *i.e.*, 1300–1310; but it is quite characteristic of the thirteenth century treatment in the figures.[1]

* Lombardic, *i.e.* in the style of Pietro and Tullio Lombardo,[2] in the fifteenth century (not *Lombard*).

† All this, it will be observed, is that seeking for beauty at the cost of truth which we have generally noted in the last chapter.

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[1] [This illustration is from folio 76 of the Book of Hours noted at Vol. XI. p. 9.]

[2] [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 354).]

indeed discredited, but also the fact which was *not* presented to the imagination was forgotten; all true grounds of faith were gradually undermined, and the beholder was either enticed into mere luxury of fanciful enjoyment, believing nothing; or left, in his confusion of mind, the prey of vain tales and traditions; while in his best feelings he was unconsciously subject to the power of the fallacious picture, and, with no sense of the real cause of his error, bowed himself, in prayer or adoration, to the lovely lady on her golden throne, when he would never have dreamed of doing so to the Jewish girl in her outcast poverty, or, in her simple household, to the carpenter's wife.

§ 10. But a shadow of increasing darkness fell upon the human mind as art proceeded to still more perfect realization. These fantasies of the earlier painters, though they darkened faith, never hardened *feeling;* on the contrary, the frankness of their unlikelihood proceeded mainly from the endeavour on the part of the painter to express, not the actual fact, but the enthusiastic state of his own feelings about the fact; he covers the Virgin's dress with gold, not with any idea of representing the Virgin as she ever was, or ever will be seen, but with a burning desire to show what his love and reverence would think fittest for her. He erects for the stable a Lombardic portico, not because he supposes the Lombardi to have built stables in Palestine in the days of Tiberius, but to show that the manger in which Christ was laid is, in his eyes, nobler than the greatest architecture in the world. He fills his landscape with church spires and silver streams, not because he supposes that either were in sight at Bethlehem, but to remind the beholder of the peaceful course and succeeding power of Christianity. And, regarded with due sympathy and clear understanding of these thoughts of the artist, such pictures remain most impressive and touching, even to this day. I shall refer to them in future,[1] in general terms,

[1] [As, for instance, in § 20 below.]

as the pictures of the "Angelican Ideal"—Angelico being the central master of the school.

§ 11. It was far otherwise in the next step of the Realistic progress. The greater his powers became, the more the mind of the painter was absorbed in their attainment, and complacent in their display. The early arts of laying on bright colours smoothly, of burnishing golden ornaments, or tracing, leaf by leaf, the outlines of flowers, were not so difficult as that they should materially occupy the thoughts of the artist, or furnish foundation for his conceit; he learned these rudiments of his work without pain, and employed them without pride, his spirit being left free to express, so far as it was capable of them, the reaches of higher thought. But when accurate shade, and subtle colour, and perfect anatomy, and complicated perspective, became necessary to the work, the artist's whole energy was employed in learning the laws of these, and his whole pleasure consisted in exhibiting them. His life was devoted, not to the objects of art, but to the cunning of it; and the sciences of composition and light and shade were pursued as if there were abstract good in them;—as if, like astronomy or mathematics, they were ends in themselves, irrespective of anything to be effected by them. And without perception, on the part of any one, of the abyss to which all were hastening, a fatal change of aim took place throughout the whole world of art. In early times *art was employed for the display of religious facts;* now, *religious facts were employed for the display of art.* The transition, though imperceptible, was consummate; it involved the entire destiny of painting. It was passing from the paths of life to the paths of death.[1]

§ 12. And this change was all the more fatal, because at first veiled by an appearance of greater dignity and sincerity than were possessed by the older art. One of the earliest results of the new knowledge was the putting away the

[1] [Compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting,* §§ 125–127 (Vol. XII. pp. 148–150).]

greater part of the *unlikelihoods* and fineries of the ancient pictures, and an apparently closer following of nature and probability. All the fantasy which I have just been blaming as disturbant of the simplicity of faith, was first subdued,—then despised and cast aside. The appearances of nature were more closely followed in everything; and the crowned Queen-Virgin of Perugino sank into a simple Italian mother in Raphael's Madonna of the Chair.[1]

§ 13. Was not this, then, a healthy change? No. It *would* have been healthy if it had been effected with a pure motive, and the new truths would have been precious if they had been sought for truth's sake. But they were not sought for truth's sake, but for pride's; and truth which is sought for display may be just as harmful as truth which is spoken in malice. The glittering childishness of the old art was rejected, not because it was false, but because it was easy; and, still more, because the painter had no longer any religious passion to express. He could think of the Madonna now very calmly, with no desire to pour out the treasures of earth at her feet, or crown her brows with the golden shafts of heaven. He could think of her as an available subject for the display of transparent shadows, skilful tints, and scientific foreshortenings,—as a fair woman, forming, if well painted, a pleasant piece of furniture for the corner of a boudoir, and best imagined by combination of the beauties of the prettiest contadinas. He could think of her, in her last maternal agony, with academical discrimination; sketch in first her skeleton, invest her, in serene science, with the muscles of misery and the fibres of sorrow; then cast the grace of antique drapery over the nakedness of her desolation, and fulfil, with studious lustre of tears and delicately painted pallor, the perfect type of the "Mater Dolorosa."

§ 14. It was thus that Raphael thought of the Madonna.*

* This is one form of the sacrifice of expression to technical merit, generally noted at the end of the 10th paragraph of the last chapter.

[1] [For another reference to the Madonna della Seggiola, see Vol. IV. p. 85 and *n.*]

Now observe, when the subject was thus scientifically completed, it became necessary, as we have just said, to the full display of all the power of the artist, that it should in many respects be more faithfully imagined than it had been hitherto. "Keeping,"[1] "Expression," "Historical Unity," and such other requirements, were enforced on the painter, in the same tone, and with the same purpose, as the purity of his oil and the accuracy of his perspective. He was told that the figure of Christ should be "dignified," those of the Apostles "expressive," that of the Virgin "modest," and those of children "innocent." All this was perfectly true; and in obedience to such directions, the painter proceeded to manufacture certain arrangements of apostolic sublimity, virginal mildness, and infantine innocence, which, being free from the quaint imperfection and contradictoriness of the early art, were looked upon by the European public as true things, and trustworthy representations of the events of religious history. The pictures of Francia and Bellini had been received as pleasant visions. But the cartoons of Raphael were received as representations of historical fact.

§ 15. Now, neither they, nor any other work of the period, were representations either of historical or of possible fact. They were, in the strictest sense of the word, "compositions,"—cold arrangements of propriety and agreeableness, according to academical formulas, the painter never in any case making the slightest effort to conceive the thing as it really must have happened, but only to gather together graceful lines and beautiful faces, in such compliance with commonplace ideas of the subject as might obtain for the whole an "epic unity," or some such other form of scholastic perfectness.

§ 16. Take a very important instance.

[1] [A term very common in the art-criticism of the eighteenth century, meaning the maintenance of the proper relations between nearer and more distant objects. Thus Goldsmith, parodying the art-slang of his day: "What do you think, sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? There's the true keeping in it" (*Citizen of the World*, lv.).]

I suppose there is no event in the whole life of Christ to which, in hours of doubt or fear, men turn with more anxious thirst to know the close facts of it, or with more earnest and passionate dwelling upon every syllable of its recorded narrative, than Christ's showing Himself to His disciples at the lake of Galilee. There is something pre-eminently open, natural, full fronting our disbelief, in this manifestation. The others, recorded after the resurrection, were sudden, phantom-like, occurring to men in profound sorrow and wearied agitation of heart; not, it might seem, safe judges of what they saw. But the agitation was now over. They had gone back to their daily work, thinking still their business lay net-wards, unmeshed from the literal rope and drag. "Simon Peter saith unto them, 'I go a fishing.' They say unto him, 'We also go with thee.'" True words enough, and having far echo beyond those Galilean hills. That night they caught nothing; but when the morning came, in the clear light of it, behold, a figure stood on the shore. They were not thinking of anything but their fruitless hauls. They had no guess who it was. It asked them simply if they had caught anything. They said No; and it tells them to cast yet again. And John shades his eyes from the morning sun with his hand, to look who it is; and though the glinting of the sea, too, dazzles him, he makes out who it is, at last; and poor Simon, not to be outrun this time, tightens his fisher's coat about him, and dashes in, over the nets. One would have liked to see him swim those hundred yards, and stagger to his knees on the beach.

Well, the others get to the beach, too, in time, in such slow way as men in general do get, in this world, to its true shore, much impeded by that wonderful "dragging the net with fishes"; but they get there—seven of them in all;—first the Denier, and then the slowest believer, and then the quickest believer, and then the two throne-seekers, and two more, we know not who.

They sit down on the shore face to face with Him,

§ 16 Take a ~~single~~ ~~single~~ ~~but~~ very important instance.
I suppose there is no event in the whole life of Christ
to which in hours of doubt, or fear, men ~~we~~ turn with more
anxious ~~wat~~ thirst to know the close facts of it — with
more earnest and passionate dwelling upon every ~~recorded~~
~~wor~~ syllable of its recorded narrative ~~description~~ — than that showing
~~of~~ himself to his disciples at the lake of Galilee. There
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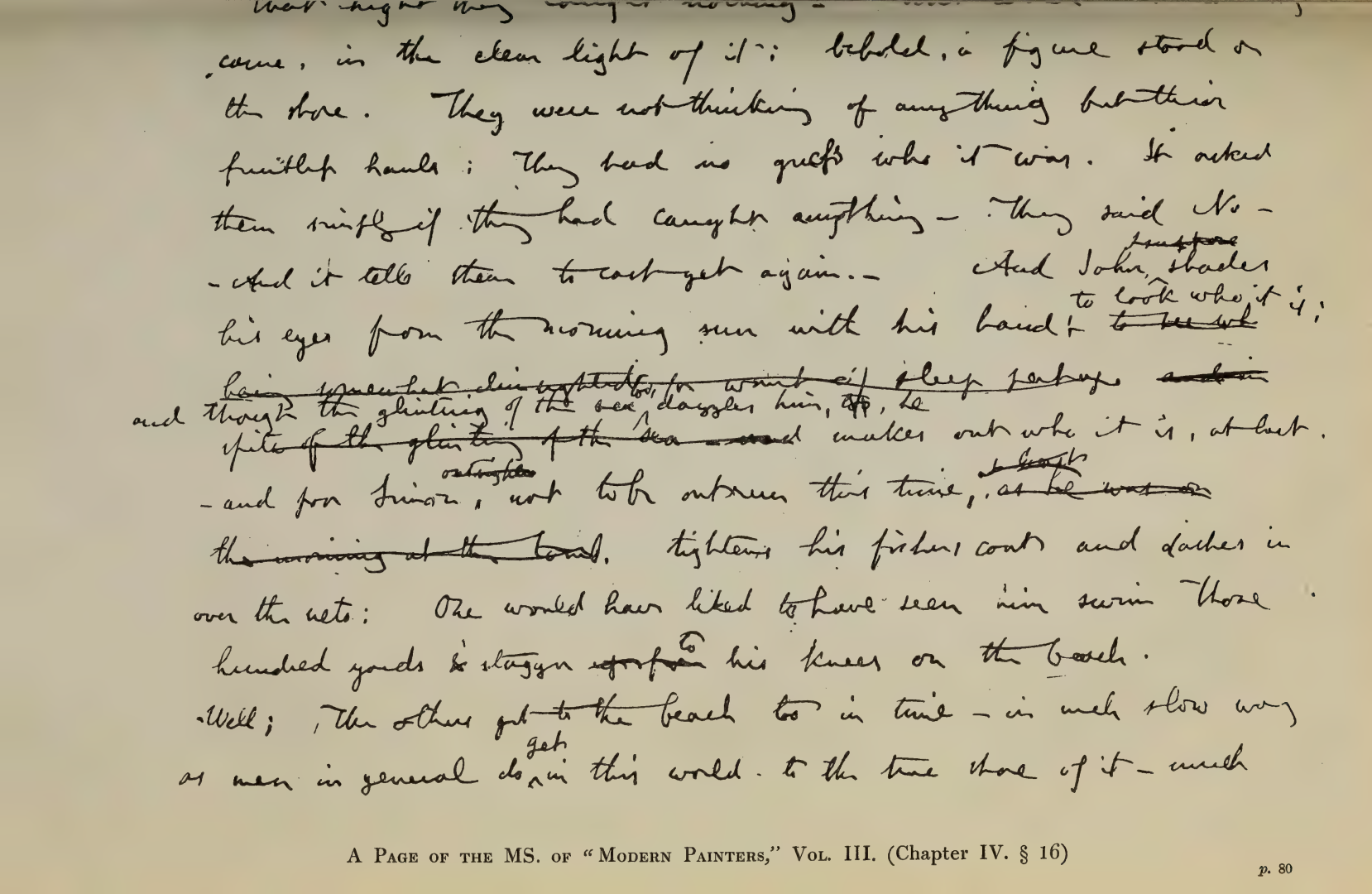
was now passed. They had gone back to their daily
work. — thinking still their business lay ~~in the~~ networks. not
yet unmeshed from the literal ~~cords~~ rope and drag. Simon



that night they caught nothing — [illegible]

came, in the clear light of it: behold, a figure stood on the shore. They were not thinking of anything but their fruitless hauls: They had no guess who it was. It asked them simply if they had caught anything — They said No — And it tells them to cast yet again. — And John, ~~[illegible]~~ shades his eyes from the morning sun with his hand to look who it is; ~~to see wh~~ ~~being somewhat disinsighted, for want of sleep perhaps~~ ~~and in~~ and through the glinting of the sea too, dazzles him, ~~[illegible]~~, he ~~spite of the glinting of the sea — and~~ makes out who it is, at last. — and poor Simon, ~~outsight~~ not to be outrun this time, ~~at least~~ ~~as he was on the morning at the land~~. tightens his fishers coat and dashes in over the nets: One would have liked to have seen him swim those hundred yards & staggers ~~up from~~ to his knees on the beach. Well; The others get ~~to the~~ beach too in time — in much slow way as men in general do get in this world to the true shore of it — much

A Page of the MS. of "Modern Painters," Vol. III. (Chapter IV. § 16)

and eat their broiled fish as He bids. And then, to Peter, all dripping still, shivering and amazed, staring at Christ in the sun,[1] on the other side of the coal fire,—thinking a little, perhaps, of what happened by another coal fire, when it was colder, and having had no word once changed with him by his Master since that look of His,—to him, so amazed, comes the question, "Simon, lovest thou Me?" Try to feel that a little, and think of it till it is true to you; and then, take up that infinite monstrosity and hypocrisy—Raphael's cartoon of the Charge to Peter.[2] Note, first, the bold fallacy—the putting *all* the Apostles there, a mere lie to serve the Papal heresy of the Petric supremacy, by putting them all in the background while Peter receives the charge, and making them all witnesses to it. Note the handsomely curled hair and neatly tied sandals of the men who had been out all night in the sea-mists and on the slimy decks. Note their convenient dresses for going a-fishing, with trains that lie a yard along the ground, and goodly fringes,—all made to match, an apostolic fishing costume.* Note how Peter especially (whose chief glory was in his wet coat *girt* about him, and naked limbs) is enveloped in folds and fringes, so as to kneel and hold his keys with grace. No fire of coals at all, nor lonely mountain shore, but a pleasant Italian landscape, full of villas and churches, and a flock of sheep to be pointed at; and the whole group of Apostles, not round Christ, as they would have been naturally, but straggling away in a line, that they may all be shown.

* I suppose Raphael intended a reference to Numbers xv. 38; but if he did, the *blue* riband, or "vitta," as it is in the Vulgate, should have been on the borders too.

[1] [In the second of his lectures on *The Art of England* (1883), Ruskin referred to this passage as a study in "literal and close realization"—"not in the least intending any symbolism either in the coat or the dripping water, or the morning sunshine; but merely and straitly striving to put the facts before the reader's eyes as positively as if he had seen the thing come to pass on Brighton beach" (§ 32) See also Introduction above, p. lx. The Bible references are to John xxi.]

[2] [In the Victoria and Albert (South Kensington) Museum.]

The simple truth is, that the moment we look at the picture we feel our belief of the whole thing taken away. There is, visibly, no possibility of that group ever having existed, in any place, or on any occasion. It is all a mere mythic absurdity, and faded concoction of fringes, muscular arms, and curly heads of Greek philosophers.

§ 17. Now, the evil consequences of the acceptance of this kind of religious idealism for true, were instant and manifold.[1] So far as it was received and trusted in by thoughtful persons, it only served to chill all the conceptions of sacred history which they might otherwise have obtained. Whatever they could have fancied for themselves about the wild, strange, infinitely stern, infinitely tender, infinitely varied veracities of the life of Christ, was blotted out by the vapid fineries of Raphael: the rough Galilean pilot, the orderly custom receiver, and all the questioning wonder and fire of uneducated apostleship, were obscured under an antique mask of philosophical faces and long robes. The feeble, subtle, suffering, ceaseless energy and humiliation of St. Paul were confused with an idea of a meditative Hercules leaning on a sweeping sword;* and the mighty presences of Moses and Elias were softened by introductions of delicate grace, adopted from dancing nymphs and rising Auroras.†

Now, no vigorously minded religious person could possibly receive pleasure or help from such art as this; and the necessary result was the instant rejection of it by the healthy religion of the world. Raphael ministered, with

* In the St. Cecilia of Bologna.[2]

† In the Transfiguration. Do but try to believe that Moses and Elias are really there talking with Christ. Moses in the loveliest heart and midst of the land which onee it had been denied him to behold,—Elijah treading the earth again, from which he had been swept to heaven in fire; both now with a mightier message than ever they had given in life,—mightier,

[1] [Ruskin quoted §§ 17, 18, with some further comments, in the second of his papers (1878) entitled *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism* (§ 15).]

[2] [In the Accademia; St. Cecilia in ecstasy; the figure of St. Paul fills one corner of the picture. For references to the figure of Cecilia, see Vol. II. p. 167, Vol. IV. p. 212.]

applause, to the impious luxury of the Vatican, but was trampled under foot at once by every believing and advancing Christian of his own and subsequent times; and thenceforward pure Christianity and "high art" took separate roads, and fared on, as best they might, independently of each other.

§ 18. But although Calvin, and Knox, and Luther, and their flocks, with all the hardest-headed and truest-hearted faithful left in Christendom, thus spurned away the spurious art, and all art with it, (not without harm to themselves, such as a man must needs sustain in cutting off a decayed limb,*) certain conditions of weaker Christianity suffered the false system to retain influence over them; and to this day, the clear and tasteless poison of the art of Raphael infects with sleep of infidelity the hearts of millions of Christians. It is the first cause of all that pre-eminent *dulness* which characterises what Protestants call sacred art; a dulness not merely baneful in making religion distasteful to the young, but in sickening, as we have seen, all vital belief of religion in the old. A dim sense of impossibility attaches itself always to the graceful emptiness of the representation; we feel instinctively that the painted Christ and painted apostle are not beings that ever did or could exist; and this fatal sense of fair fabulousness, and well-composed impossibility, steals gradually from the picture into the history, until we find ourselves reading St. Mark

in closing their own mission,—mightier, in speaking to Christ "of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."[1] They, men of like passions once with us, appointed to speak to the Redeemer of His death.

And, then, look at Raphael's kicking gracefulnesses.[2]

* Luther had no dislike of religious art on principle. Even the stove in his chamber was wrought with sacred subjects. See Mrs. Stowe's *Sunny Memories*.[3]

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[1] [Luke ix. 21.]

[2] [See, again, *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism* for a further criticism of the figures of Moses and Elias, and for another reference to Raphael's "Transfiguration" in the Vatican Gallery), see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 23.]

[3] [*Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, "Letter xlv. Wittenberg," 1854, p. 265. The book is referred to in *Seven Lamps* (2nd edition, 1855), Vol. VIII. p. 9 *n.*]

or St. Luke with the same admiring, but uninterested, incredulity, with which we contemplate Raphael.

§ 19. On a certain class of minds, however, these Raphaelesque and other sacred paintings of high order, have had, of late years, another kind of influence, much resembling that which they had at first on the most pious Romanists. They are used to excite certain conditions of religious dream or reverie; being again, as in earliest times, regarded not as representations of fact, but as expressions of sentiment respecting the fact. In this way the best of them have unquestionably much purifying and enchanting power; and they are helpful opponents to sinful passion and weakness of every kind. A fit of unjust anger, petty malice, unreasonable vexation, or dark passion, cannot certainly, in a mind of ordinary sensibility, hold its own in the presence of a good engraving from any work of Angelico, Memling, or Perugino. But I nevertheless believe, that he who trusts much to such helps will find them fail him at his need; and that the dependence, in any great degree, on the presence or power of a picture, indicates a wonderfully feeble sense of the presence and power of God. I do not think that any man, who is thoroughly certain that Christ is in the room, will care what sort of pictures of Christ he has on its walls; and, in the plurality of cases, the delight taken in art of this kind is, in reality, nothing more than a form of graceful indulgence of those sensibilities which the habits of a disciplined life restrain in other directions. Such art is, in a word, the opera and drama of the monk. Sometimes it is worse than this, and the love of it is the mask under which a general thirst for morbid excitement will pass itself for religion. The young lady who rises in the middle of the day, jaded by her last night's ball, and utterly incapable of any simple or wholesome religious exercise, can still gaze into the dark eyes of the Madonna di San Sisto, or dream over the whiteness of an ivory crucifix, and returns to the course of her daily life in full persuasion that her morning's feverishness has atoned for

her evening's folly. And all the while, the art which possesses these very doubtful advantages is acting for undoubtful detriment, in the various ways above examined, on the inmost fastnesses of faith; it is throwing subtle endearments round foolish traditions, confusing sweet fancies with sound doctrines, obscuring real events with unlikely semblances, and enforcing false assertions with pleasant circumstantiality, until, to the usual, and assuredly sufficient, difficulties standing in the way of belief, its votaries have added a habit of sentimentally changing what they know to be true, and of dearly loving what they confess to be false.

§ 20. Has there, then (the reader asks emphatically), been *no* true religious ideal? Has religious art never been of any service to mankind? I fear, on the whole, not. Of true religious ideal, representing events historically recorded, with solemn effort at a sincere and unartificial conception, there exist, as yet, hardly any examples. Nearly all good religious pictures fall into one or other branch of the false ideal already examined, either into the Angelican (passionate ideal) or the Raphaelesque (philosophical ideal). But there is one true form of religious art, nevertheless, in the pictures of the passionate ideal which represent imaginary beings of another world. Since it is evidently right that we should try to imagine the glories of the next world, and as this imagination must be, in each separate mind, more or less different, and unconfined by any laws of material fact, the passionate ideal has not only full scope here, but it becomes our duty to urge its powers to its utmost, so that every condition of beautiful form and colour may be employed to invest these scenes with greater delightfulness (the whole being, of course, received as an assertion of possibility, not of absolute fact). All the paradises imagined by the religious painters—the choirs of glorified saints, angels, and spiritual powers, when painted with full belief in this possibility of their existence, are true ideals; and so far from our having dwelt on these too much, I believe, rather, we have not trusted them enough,

nor accepted them enough, as possible statements of most precious truth. Nothing but unmixed good can accrue to any mind from the contemplation of Orcagna's Last Judgment or his Triumph of Death, or Angelico's Last Judgment and Paradise,[1] or any of the scenes laid in heaven by the other faithful religious masters; and the more they are considered, not as works of art, but as real visions of real things, more or less imperfectly set down, the more good will be got by dwelling upon them. The same is true of all representations of Christ as a living presence among us now, as in Hunt's Light of the World.[2]

§ 21. For the rest, there is a reality of conception in some of the works of Benozzo Gozzoli, Ghirlandajo, and Giotto, which approaches to a true ideal, even of recorded facts. But the examination of the various degrees in which sacred art has reached its proper power is not to our present purpose; still less, to investigate the infinitely difficult question of its past operation on the Christian mind. I hope to prosecute my inquiry into this subject in another work; it being enough here to mark the forms of ideal error, without historically tracing their extent, and to state generally that my impression is, up to the present moment, that the best religious art has been *hitherto* rather a fruit, and attendant sign, of sincere Christianity than a promoter of or help to it. More, I think, has always been done for God by few words than many pictures, and more by few acts than many words.

§ 22. I must not, however, quit the subject without insisting on the chief practical consequence of what we have observed, namely, that sacred art, so far from being exhausted, has yet to attain the development of its highest branches; and the task, or privilege, yet remains for mankind, to produce an art which shall be at once entirely

[1] [For Orcagna's "Last Judgment," see Vol. IV. p. 275 *n.*, and for his "Triumph of Death," Lord Lindsay's description quoted in Ruskin's Review, Vol. XII. p. 224 (§ 53), and compare below, ch. viii. § 6, p. 134. For Angelico's "Last Judgment" and "Paradise," Vol. IV. p. 275.]

[2] [See above, pp. 52, 65.]

skilful and entirely *sincere*. All the histories of the Bible are, in my judgment, yet waiting to be painted. Moses has never been painted; Elijah never; David never (except as a mere ruddy stripling); Deborah never; Gideon never; Isaiah never.[1] What single example does the reader remember of painting which suggested so much as the faintest shadow of these people, or of their deeds? Strong men in armour, or aged men with flowing beards, he *may* remember, who, when he looked at his Louvre or Uffizii catalogue, he found were intended to stand for David or for Moses. But does he suppose that, if these pictures had suggested to him the feeblest image of the presence of such men, he would have passed on, as he assuredly did, to the next picture,—representing, doubtless, Diana and Actæon, or Cupid and the Graces, or a gambling quarrel in a pothouse,—with no sense of pain, or surprise? Let him meditate over the matter, and he will find ultimately that what I say is true, and that religious art, at once complete and sincere, never yet has existed.

§ 23. It will exist: nay, I believe the era of its birth has come, and that those bright Turnerian imageries, which the European public declared to be "dotage," and those calm Pre-Raphaelite studies which, in like manner, it pronounced "puerility," form the first foundation that has been ever laid for true sacred art. Of this we shall presently reason farther. But, be it as it may, if we would cherish the hope that sacred art may, indeed, arise for *us*, two separate cautions are to be addressed to the two opposed

[1] [The passage from "All the histories of the Bible . . ." down to the end of § 22 is § 8 in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), where, at this point, Ruskin added the following note :—

> "I knew nothing, when I wrote this passage, of Luini, Filippo Lippi, or Sandro Botticelli; and had not capacity to enter into the deeper feelings even of the men whom I was chiefly studying,—Tintoret and Fra Angelico. But the British public is at present as little acquainted with the greater Florentines as I was then, and the passage, for *them*, remains true."

In connexion with the remarks in the text on paintings of religious subjects, compare the criticism of Millais' "Joshua" (exhibited 1871) in *Ariadne Florentina*, § 152, and the subsequent remarks on Botticelli's Life of Moses. For Ruskin's discovery of Luini, see Vol. IV. p. 355 and *n*.]

classes of religionists whose influence will chiefly retard that hope's accomplishment. The group calling themselves Evangelical ought no longer to render their religion an offence to men of the world by associating it only with the most vulgar forms of art. It is not necessary that they should admit either music or painting into religious service; but, if they admit either the one or the other, let it not be bad music nor bad painting: it is certainly in nowise more for Christ's honour that His praise should be sung discordantly, or His miracles painted discreditably, than that His word should be preached ungrammatically. Some Evangelicals, however, seem to take a morbid pride in the triple degradation.*

§ 24. The opposite class of men, whose natural instincts lead them to mingle the refinements of art with all the offices and practices of religion, are to be warned, on the contrary, how they mistake their enjoyments for their duties, or confound poetry with faith. I admit that it is impossible for one man to judge another in this matter, and that it can never be said with certainty how far what seems frivolity may be force, and what seems the indulgence of the heart may be, indeed, its dedication. I am ready to believe that Metastasio, expiring in a canzonet, may have died better than if his prayer had been in unmeasured

* I do not know anything more humiliating to a man of common sense, than to open what is called an "Illustrated Bible" of modern days. See, for instance, the plates in Brown's Bible (octavo: Edinburgh, 1840), a standard evangelical edition. Our habit of reducing the Psalms to doggerel before we will condescend to sing them, is a parallel abuse. It is marvellous to think that human creatures with tongues and souls should refuse to chant the verse: "Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up Thy strength, and come and help us;" preferring this:—

"Behold how Benjamin expects,
With Ephraim and Manasseh join'd,
In their deliverance, the effects
Of Thy resistless strength to find!"[1]

[1] [Tate and Brady, Psalm 80.]

syllables.* But, for the most part, it is assuredly much to be feared lest we mistake a surrender to the charms of art for one to the service of God; and, in the art which we permit, lest we substitute sentiment for sense, grace for utility. And for us all there is in this matter even a deeper danger than that of indulgence. There is the danger of Artistical Pharisaism. Of all the forms of pride and vanity, as there are none more subtle, so I believe there are none more sinful, than those which are manifested by the Pharisees of art. To be proud of birth, of place, of wit, of bodily beauty, is comparatively innocent, just because such pride is more natural, and more easily detected. But to be proud of our sanctities; to pour contempt upon our fellows, because, forsooth, we like to look at Madonnas in bowers of roses, better than at plain pictures of plain things; and to make this religious art of ours the expression of our own perpetual self-complacency,—congratulating ourselves, day by day, on our purities, proprieties, elevations, and inspirations, as above the reach of common mortals,—this I believe to be one of the wickedest and foolishest forms of human egotism; and, truly, I had rather, with great, thoughtless, humble Paul Veronese, make the Supper at Emmaus a background for two children playing with a dog[1]

* "En 1780, âgé de quatre-vingt-deux ans, au moment de recevoir le viatique, il rassembla ses forces, et chanta à son Créateur:

'Eterno Genitor,
Io t' offro il proprio figlio
Che in pegno del tuo amor
Si vuole a me donar.
A lui rivolgi il ciglio,
Mira chi t' offro; e poi,
Niega, Signor, se puoi,
Niega di perdonar.'"

—DE STENDHAL, *Vie de Metastasio*.[2]

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[1] [See above, ch. ii. § 5, p. 38; ch. iii. § 10 (A), p. 53, and "Notes on the Louvre," § 8 (in Vol. XII. p. 451).]

[2] [On page 308 of the book cited on p. 120.]

(as, God knows, men do usually put it in the background to everything, if not out of sight altogether), than join that school of modern Germanism which wears its pieties for decoration as women wear their diamonds, and spreads the dry fleeces of its sanctities between its dust and the dew of heaven.[1]

[1] [The concluding words have hitherto been ". . . and flaunts the dry fleeces of its phylacteries . . ." Ruskin altered as above in his copy for revision.]

CHAPTER V

OF THE FALSE IDEAL:—SECONDLY, PROFANE

§ 1. Such having been the effects of the pursuit of ideal beauty on the religious mind of Europe, we might be tempted next to consider in what way the same movement affected the art which concerned itself with profane subject, and, through that art, the whole temper of modern civilization.

I shall, however, merely glance at this question. It is a very painful and a very wide one. Its discussion cannot come properly within the limits, or even within the aim, of a work like this; it ought to be made the subject of a separate essay, and that essay should be written by some one who had passed less of his life than I have among mountains, and more of it among men. But one or two points may be suggested for the reader to reflect upon at his leisure.

§ 2. I said just now that we might be tempted to consider how this pursuit of the ideal *affected* profane art. Strictly speaking, it brought that art into existence. As long as men sought for truth first, and beauty secondarily, they cared chiefly, of course, for the *chief* truth, and all art was instinctively religious. But as soon as they sought for beauty first, and truth secondarily, they were punished by losing sight of spiritual truth altogether, and the profane (properly so called) schools of art were instantly developed.

The perfect human beauty, which, to a large part of the community, was by far the most interesting feature in the work of the rising school, might indeed be in some degree consistent with the agony of Madonnas, and the repentance of Magdalenes; but could not be exhibited in fulness, when

the subjects, however irreverently treated, nevertheless demanded some decency in the artist, and some gravity in the spectator. The newly acquired powers of rounding limbs, and tinting lips, had too little scope in the sanctities even of the softest womanhood; and the newly acquired conceptions of the nobility of nakedness, could in no wise be expressed beneath the robes of the prelate or the sackcloth of the recluse. But the source from which these ideas had been received afforded also full field for their expression; the heathen mythology, which had furnished the examples of these heights of art, might again become the subject of the inspirations it had kindled;—with the additional advantage that it could now be delighted in, without being believed; that its errors might be indulged, unrepressed by its awe; and those of its deities whose function was temptation might be worshipped, in scorn of those whose hands were charged with chastisement.

So, at least, men dreamed in their foolishness,—to find, as the ages wore on, that the returning Apollo bore not only his lyre, but his arrows; and that at the instant of Cytherea's resurrection to the sunshine, Persephone had reascended her throne in the deep.

§ 3. Little thinking this, they gave themselves up fearlessly to the chase of the new delight, and exhausted themselves in the pursuit of an ideal now doubly false. Formerly, though they attempted to reach an unnatural beauty, it was yet in representing historical facts and real persons; *now* they sought for the same unnatural beauty in representing tales which they knew to be fictitious, and personages who, they knew, had never existed. Such a state of things had never before been found in any nation. Every people till then had painted the acts of their kings, the triumphs of their armies, the beauty of their race, or the glory of their gods. They showed the things they had seen or done; the beings they truly loved or faithfully adored. But the ideal art of modern Europe was the shadow of a shadow; and, with mechanism substituted for perception, and bodily

beauty for spiritual life, it set itself to represent men it had never seen, customs it had never practised, and gods in whom it had never believed.

§ 4. Such art could, of course, have no help from the virtues, nor claim on the energies of men. It necessarily rooted itself in their vices and their idleness; and of their vices principally in two, pride and sensuality. To the pride was attached eminently the art of architecture; to the sensuality, those of painting and sculpture. Of the fall of architecture, as resultant from the formalist pride of its patrons and designers, I have spoken elsewhere.[1] The sensualist ideal, as seen in painting and sculpture, remains to be examined here. But one interesting circumstance is to be observed with respect to the manner of the separation of these arts. Pride, being wholly a vice, and in every phase inexcusable, wholly betrayed and destroyed the art which was founded on it. But passion, having some root and use in healthy nature, and only becoming guilty in excess, did not altogether destroy the art founded upon it. The architecture of Palladio is wholly virtueless and despicable. Not so the Venus of Titian, nor the Antiope of Correggio.[2]

§ 5. We find, then, at the close of the sixteenth century, the arts of painting and sculpture wholly devoted to entertain the indolent and satiate the luxurious. To effect these noble ends, they took a thousand different forms; painting, however, of course being the most complying, aiming sometimes at mere amusement by deception in landscapes, or minute imitation of natural objects; sometimes giving more piquant excitement in battle-pieces full of slaughter, or revels deep in drunkenness; sometimes entering upon serious subject, for the sake of grotesque fiends and picturesque infernos, or that it might introduce pretty

[1] [*Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. ii. §§ 6–86.]

[2] [For the architecture of Palladio, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 31, *Stones of Venice, passim:* see General Index. For Titian's Venus and Correggio's Antiope, compare Vol. XII. p. 145; and for the latter, see also *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 227).]

children as cherubs, and handsome women as Magdalenes, and Maries of Egypt, or portraits of patrons in the character of the more decorous saints: but more frequently, for direct flatteries of this kind, recurring to pagan mythology, and painting frail ladies as goddesses or graces, and foolish kings in radiant apotheosis; while, for the earthly delight of the persons whom it honoured as divine, it ransacked the records of luscious fable, and brought back in fullest depth of dye and flame of fancy, the impurest dreams of the un-Christian ages.

§ 6. Meanwhile, the art of sculpture, less capable of ministering to mere amusement, was more or less reserved for the affectations of taste; and the study of the classical statues introduced various ideas on the subjects of "purity," "chastity," and "dignity," such as it was possible for people to entertain who were themselves impure, luxurious, and ridiculous. It is a matter of extreme difficulty to explain the exact character of this modern sculpturesque ideal; but its relation to the true ideal may be best understood by considering it as in exact parallelism with the relation of the word "taste" to the word "love." Wherever the word "taste" is used with respect to matters of art, it indicates either that the thing spoken of belongs to some inferior class of objects, or that the person speaking has a false conception of its nature. For, consider the exact sense in which a work of art is said to be "in good or bad taste." It does not mean that it is true or false; that it is beautiful or ugly: but that it does or does not comply either with the laws of choice, which are enforced by certain modes of life, or the habits of mind produced by a particular sort of education. It does not mean merely fashionable, that is, complying with a momentary caprice of the upper classes; but it means agreeing with the habitual sense which the most refined education, common to those upper classes at the period, gives to their whole mind. Now, therefore, so far as that education does indeed tend to make the senses delicate, and the perceptions accurate, and thus

enables people to be pleased with quiet instead of gaudy colour, and with graceful instead of coarse form; and, by long acquaintance with the best things, to discern quickly what is fine from what is common;—so far, acquired taste is an honourable faculty, and it is true praise of anything to say it is "in good taste." But[1] so far as this higher education has a tendency to narrow the sympathies and harden the heart, diminishing the interest of all beautiful things by familiarity, until even what is best can hardly please, and what is brightest hardly entertain;—so far as it fosters pride, and leads men to found the pleasure they take in anything, not on the worthiness of the thing, but on the degree in which it indicates some greatness of their own (as people build marble porticoes, and inlay marble floors, not so much because they like the colours of marble, or find it pleasant to the foot, as because such porches and floors are costly, and separated in all human eyes from plain entrances of stone and timber);—so far as it leads people to prefer gracefulness of dress, manner, and aspect, to value of substance and heart, liking a well *said* thing better than a true thing, and a well-trained manner better than a sincere one, and a delicately formed face better than a good-natured one, and in all other ways and things setting custom and semblance above everlasting truth;—so far, finally, as it induces a sense of inherent distinction between class and class, and causes everything to be more or less despised which has no social rank, so that the affection, pleasure, and grief of a clown are looked upon as of no interest compared with the affection and grief of a

[1] [The passage—beginning a few lines above "So far as education does indeed end . . ." down to nearly the end of § 6 ". . . to the understanding of noble art"—is § 6 in *Frondes Agrestes*, where Ruskin, ante-dating it, put the following footnote :—

"Nobody need begin this second volume sentence unless they are breathed like the Graeme :—

'Right up Ben Ledi could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.'"

The quotation is from *The Lady of the Lake*, canto ii. 25 ("Right up Ben Lomond," etc.)]

well-bred man;—just so far, in all these several ways, the feeling induced by what is called a "liberal education" is utterly adverse to the understanding of noble art; and the name which is given to the feeling,—Taste, Goût, Gusto,—in all languages indicates the baseness of it, for it implies that art gives only a kind of pleasure analogous to that derived from eating by the palate.

§ 7. Modern education, not in art only, but in all other things referable to the same standard, has invariably given taste in this bad sense; it has given fastidiousness of choice without judgment, superciliousness of manner without dignity, refinement of habit without purity, grace of expression without sincerity, and desire of loveliness without love; and the modern "ideal" of high art is a curious mingling of the gracefulness and reserve of the drawing-room with a certain measure of classical sensuality. Of this last element, and the singular artifices by which vice succeeds in combining it with what appears to be pure and severe, it would take us long to reason fully: I would rather leave the reader to follow out for himself the consideration of the influence, in this direction, of statues, bronzes, and paintings, as at present employed by the upper circles of London, and (especially) Paris; and this is not so much in the works which are really fine, as in the multiplied coarse copies of them; taking the widest range, from Dannaeker's Ariadne[1] down to the amorous shepherd and shepherdess in china on the drawing-room time-piece, rigidly questioning, in each case, how far the charm of the art does indeed depend on some appeal to the inferior passions. Let it be considered, for instance, exactly how far the value of a picture of a girl's head by Greuze would be lowered in the market if the dress, which now leaves the bosom bare, were raised to the neck; and how far, in the commonest lithograph of some utterly popular subject,—for instance, the

[1] [This much-copied marble of Ariadne on the Panther is in the Ariadneum, or Bethmann's Museum, at Frankfort. It is the chief work (1813) of Dannaeker (1758–1836), a sculptor of Stuttgart.]

teaching of Uncle Tom by Eva,[1]—the sentiment which is supposed to be excited by the exhibition of Christianity in youth is complicated with that which depends upon Eva's having a dainty foot and a well-made satin slipper;—and then, having completely determined for himself how far the element exists, consider farther whether, when art is thus frequent (for frequent he will assuredly find it to be) in its appeal to the lower passions, it is likely to attain the highest order of merit, or be judged by the truest standards of judgment. For, of all the causes which have combined, in modern times, to lower the rank of art, I believe this to be one of the most fatal; while, reciprocally, it may be questioned how far society suffers, in its turn, from the influences possessed over it by the arts it has degraded. It seems to me a subject of the very deepest interest to determine what has been the effect upon the European nations of the great change by which art became again capable of ministering delicately to the lower passions, as it had in the worst days of Rome; how far, indeed, in all ages, the fall of nations may be attributed to art's arriving at this particular stage among them. I do not mean that, in any of its stages, it is incapable of being employed for evil, but that assuredly an Egyptian, Spartan, or Norman was unexposed to the kind of temptation which is continually offered by the delicate painting and sculpture of modern days; and, although the diseased imagination might complete the imperfect image of beauty from the coloured image on the wall,* or the most revolting thoughts be suggested by the mocking barbarism of the Gothic sculpture, their hard outline and rude execution were free from all the subtle treachery which now fills the flushed canvas and the rounded marble.

§ 8. I cannot, however, pursue this inquiry here. For our present purpose it is enough to note that the feeling,

* Ezek. xxiii. 14.

[1] [The scene of "Tom and Eva in the arbour": see p. 223 of the edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* illustrated by Cruikshank, 1852.]

in itself so debased, branches upwards into that of which, while no one has cause to be ashamed, no one, on the other hand, has cause to be proud, namely, the admiration of physical beauty in the human form as distinguished from expression of character. Every one can easily appreciate the merit of regular features and well-formed limbs, but it requires some attention, sympathy, and sense, to detect the charm of passing expression, or life-disciplined character. The beauty of the Apollo Belvidere,[1] or Venus de' Medici, is perfectly palpable to any shallow fine lady or fine gentleman, though they would have perceived none in the face of an old weather-beaten St. Peter, or a grey-haired "Grandmother Lois."[2] The knowledge that long study is necessary to produce these regular types of the human form renders the facile admiration matter of eager self-complacency; the shallow spectator, delighted that he can really, and without hypocrisy, admire what required much thought to produce, supposes himself endowed with the highest critical faculties, and easily lets himself be carried into rhapsodies about the "ideal," which, when all is said, if they be accurately examined, will be found literally to mean nothing more than that the figure has got handsome calves to its legs, and a straight nose.

§ 9. That they do mean, in reality, nothing more than this may be easily ascertained by watching the taste of the same persons in other things. The fashionable lady who will write five or six pages in her diary respecting the effect upon her mind of such and such an "ideal" in marble, will have her drawing-room table covered with Books of Beauty, in which the engravings represent the human form in every possible aspect of distortion and affectation; and the connoisseur who, in the morning, pretends to the most exquisite taste in the antique, will be seen, in the evening, in his opera-stall, applauding the least graceful gestures of the least modest figurante.

[1] [For the Apollo Belvidere, see Vol. III. pp. 118, 608, 627; Vol. IV. p. 329 *n.*]
[2] [2 Timothy i. 5.]

§ 10. But even this vulgar pursuit of physical beauty (vulgar in the profoundest sense, for there is no vulgarity like the vulgarity of education) would be less contemptible if it really succeeded in its object; but, like all pursuits carried to inordinate lengths, it defeats itself. Physical beauty *is* a noble thing when it is seen in perfectness; but the manner in which the moderns pursue their ideal prevents their ever really seeing what they are always seeking; for, requiring that all forms should be regular and faultless, they permit, or even compel, their painters and sculptors to work chiefly by rule, altering their models to fit their preconceived notions of what is right. When such artists look at a face, they do not give it the attention necessary to discern what beauty is already in its peculiar features; but only to see how best it may be altered into something for which they have themselves laid down the laws. Nature never unveils her beauty to such a gaze. She keeps whatever she has done best, close sealed, until it is regarded with reverence. To the painter who honours her, she will open a revelation in the face of a street mendicant; but in the work of a painter who alters her, she will make Portia become ignoble, and Perdita graceless.

§ 11. Nor is the effect less for evil on the mind of the general observer. The lover of ideal beauty, with all his conceptions narrowed by rule, never looks carefully enough upon the features which do not come under his law (or any others), to discern the inner beauty in them. The strange intricacies about the lines of the lips, and marvellous shadows and watchfires of the eye, and wavering traceries of the eyelash, and infinite modulations of the brow, wherein high humanity is embodied, are all invisible to him. He finds himself driven back at last, with all his idealism, to the lionne of the ball-room, whom youth and passion can as easily distinguish as his utmost critical science; whereas, the observer who has accustomed himself to take human faces as God made them, will often find as much beauty on a village green as in the proudest room of state, and as much

in the free seats of a church aisle, as in all the sacred paintings of the Vatican or the Pitti.

§ 12. Then, farther, the habit of disdaining ordinary truth, and seeking to alter it so as to fit the fancy of the beholder, gradually infects the mind in all its other operations; so that it begins to propose to itself an ideal in history, an ideal in general narration, an ideal in portraiture and description, and in everything else where truth may be painful or uninteresting; with the necessary result of more or less weakness, wickedness, and uselessness in all that is done or said, with the desire of concealing this painful truth. And, finally, even when truth is not intentionally concealed, the pursuer of idealism will pass his days in false and useless trains of thought, pluming himself, all the while, upon his superiority therein to the rest of mankind. A modern German, without either invention or sense, seeing a rapid in a river, will immediately devote the remainder of the day to the composition of dialogues between amorous water nymphs and unhappy mariners; while the man of true invention, power, and sense will, instead, set himself to consider whether the rocks in the river could have their points knocked off, or the boats upon it be made with stronger bottoms.

§ 13. Of this final baseness of the false ideal, its miserable waste of the time, strength, and available intellect of man, by turning, as I have said above, innocence of pastime into seriousness of occupation, it is, of course, hardly possible to sketch out even so much as the leading manifestations. The vain and haughty projects of youth for future life; the giddy reveries of insatiable self-exaltation; the discontented dreams of what might have been or should be, instead of the thankful understanding of what is; the casting about for sources of interest in senseless fiction, instead of the real human histories of the people round us; the prolongation from age to age of romantic historical deceptions instead of sifted truth; the pleasures taken in fanciful portraits of rural or romantic life in poetry and on

the stage, without the smallest effort to rescue the living rural population of the world from its ignorance or misery; the excitement of the feelings by laboured imagination of spirits, fairies, monsters, and demons, issuing in total blindness of heart and sight to the true presences of beneficent or destructive spiritual powers around us; in fine, the constant abandonment of all the straightforward paths of sense and duty, for fear of losing some of the enticement of ghostly joys, or trampling somewhat "sopra lor vanità, che par persona;"[1] all these various forms of false idealism have so entangled the modern mind, often called, I suppose ironically, practical, that truly I believe there never yet was idolatry of stock or staff so utterly unholy as this our idolatry of shadows; nor can I think that, of those who burnt incense under oaks, and poplars, and elms, because "the shadow thereof was good," it could in any wise be more justly or sternly declared than of us—"The wind hath bound them up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices."*

* Hosea, chap. iv. 12, 13, and 19.

[1] [*Inferno*, vi. 36; quoted also in "Review of Lord Lindsay," Vol. XII. p. 170.]

CHAPTER VI

OF THE TRUE IDEAL:—FIRST, PURIST[1]

§ 1. HAVING thus glanced at the principal modes in which the imagination works for evil, we must rapidly note also the principal directions in which its operation is admissible, even in changing or strangely combining what is brought within its sphere.

For hitherto we have spoken as if every change wilfully wrought by the imagination was an error; apparently implying that its only proper work was to summon up the memories of past events, and the anticipations of future ones, under aspects which would bear the sternest tests of historical investigation, or abstract reasoning. And in general this is, indeed, its noblest work. Nevertheless, it has also permissible functions peculiarly its own, and certain rights of feigning, adorning, and fancifully arranging, inalienable from its nature. Everything that is natural is, within certain limits, right; and we must take care not, in overseverity, to deprive ourselves of any refreshing or animating power ordained to be in us for our help.

§ 2. (A.) It was noted in speaking above of the Angelican or passionate ideal, that there was a certain virtue in it dependent on the expression of its loving enthusiasm. (Chap. IV. § 10.)

(B.) In speaking of the pursuit of beauty as one of the characteristics of the highest art, it was also said that there were certain ways of showing this beauty by gathering together, without altering, the finest forms, and marking them by gentle emphasis. (Chap. III. § 15.)

[1] [For a note by Ruskin on this chapter, see Vol. IV. p. 190 *n.*]

(C.) And in speaking of the true uses of imagination, it was said, that we might be allowed to create for ourselves, in innocent play, fairies and naiads, and other such fictitious creatures. (Chap. IV. § 5.)

Now this loving enthusiasm, which seeks for a beauty fit to be the object of eternal love; this inventive skill, which kindly displays what exists around us in the world; and this playful energy of thought which delights in various conditions of the impossible, are three forms of idealism more or less connected with the three tendencies of the artistical mind which I had occasion to explain in the chapter on the Nature of Gothic, in the *Stones of Venice*.[1] It was there pointed out, that, the things around us containing mixed good and evil, certain men chose the good and left the evil (thence properly called Purists); others received both good and evil together (thence properly called Naturalists); and others had a tendency to choose the evil and leave the good, whom, for convenience' sake, I termed Sensualists. I do not mean to say that painters of fairies and naiads must belong to this last and lowest class, or habitually choose the evil and leave the good; but there is, nevertheless a strange connection between the reinless play of the imagination, and a sense of the presence of evil, which is usually more or less developed in those creations of the imagination to which we properly attach the word *Grotesque*.

For this reason, we shall find it convenient to arrange what we have to note respecting true idealism under the three heads—

A. Purist Idealism.
B. Naturalist Idealism.
C. Grotesque Idealism.

§ 3. A. Purist Idealism.—It results from the unwillingness of men whose dispositions are more than ordinarily tender and holy, to contemplate the various forms of definite

[1] [Vol. X. ch. vi. § 56.]

evil which necessarily occur in the daily aspects of the world around them. They shrink from them as from pollution, and endeavour to create for themselves an imaginary state, in which pain and imperfection either do not exist, or exist in some edgeless and enfeebled condition.

As, however, pain and imperfection are, by eternal laws, bound up with existence, so far as it is visible to us, the endeavour to cast them away invariably indicates a comparative childishness of mind, and produces a childish form of art. In general, the effort is most successful when it is most naïve, and when the ignorance of the draughtsman is in some frank proportion to his innocence. For instance, one of the modes of treatment, the most conducive to this ideal expression, is simply drawing everything without shadows, as if the sun were everywhere at once. This, in the present state of our knowledge, we could not do with grace, because we could not do it without fear or shame. But an artist of the thirteenth century did it with no disturbance of conscience,—knowing no better, or rather, in some sense, we might say, knowing no worse. It is, however, evident, at the first thought, that all representations of nature without evil must either be ideals of a future world, or be false ideals, if they are understood to be representations of facts. They can only be classed among the branches of the true ideal, in so far as they are understood to be nothing more than expressions of the painter's personal affections or hopes.

§ 4. Let us take one or two instances in order clearly to explain our meaning.

The life of Angelico was almost entirely spent in the endeavour to imagine the beings belonging to another world. By purity of life, habitual elevation of thought, and natural sweetness of disposition, he was enabled to express the sacred affections upon the human countenance as no one ever did before or since. In order to effect clearer distinction between heavenly beings and those of this world, he represents the former as clothed in draperies of the

purest colour, crowned with glories of burnished gold, and entirely shadowless. With exquisite choice of gesture, and disposition of folds of drapery, this mode of treatment gives, perhaps, the best idea of spiritual beings which the human mind is capable of forming. It is, therefore, a true ideal;* but the mode in which it is arrived at (being so far mechanical and contradictory of the appearances of nature) necessarily precludes those who practise it from being complete masters of their art. It is always childish, but beautiful in its childishness.[1]

§ 5. The works of our own Stothard are examples of the operation of another mind, singular in gentleness and purity, upon mere worldly subject. It seems as if Stothard could not conceive wickedness, coarseness, or baseness; every one of his figures looks as if it had been copied from some creature who had never harboured an unkind thought, or permitted itself in an ignoble action. With this intense love of mental purity is joined, in Stothard, a love of mere physical smoothness and softness, so that he lived in a universe of soft grass and stainless fountains, tender trees, and stones at which no foot could stumble.

All this is very beautiful, and may sometimes urge us to an endeavour to make the world itself more like the conception of the painter. At least, in the midst of its malice, misery, and baseness, it is often a relief to glance at the graceful shadows, and take, for momentary companionship, creatures full only of love, gladness, and honour. But the perfect truth will at last vindicate itself against the partial truth; the help which we can gain from the unsubstantial vision will be only like that which we may sometimes receive, in weariness, from the scent of a flower or the passing of a breeze. For all firm aid, and steady use, we must look

* As noted above in chap. iv. § 20.

[1] [For other references to the "purism" of Fra Angelico and Stothard, see Vol. X. p. 222 *n.*]

to harder realities; and as far as the painter himself is regarded, we can only receive such work as the sign of an amiable imbecility. It is indeed ideal; but ideal as a fair dream is in the dawn of morning, before the faculties are astir. The apparent completeness of grace can never be attained without much definite falsification as well as omission; stones over which we cannot stumble, must be ill-drawn stones; trees, which are all gentleness and softness, cannot be trees of wood; nor companies without evil in them, companies of flesh and blood. The habit of falsification (with whatever aim) begins always in dulness and ends always in incapacity: nothing can be more pitiable than any endeavour by Stothard to express facts beyond his own sphere of soft pathos or graceful mirth, and nothing more unwise than the aim at a similar ideality by any painter who has power to render a sincerer truth.

§ 6. I remember another interesting example of ideality on this same root, but belonging to another branch of it, in the works of a young German painter, which I saw some time ago in a London drawing-room. He had been travelling in Italy, and had brought home a portfolio of sketches remarkable alike for their fidelity and purity. Every one was a laborious and accurate study of some particular spot. Every cottage, every cliff, every tree, at the site chosen, had been drawn, and drawn with palpable sincerity of portraiture, and yet in such a spirit that it was impossible to conceive that any sin or misery had ever entered into one of the scenes he had represented; and the volcanic horrors of Radicofani,[1] the pestilent gloom of the Pontines, and the boundless despondency of the Campagna, became, under his hand, only various appearances of Paradise.

It was very interesting to observe the minute emendations or omissions by which this was effected. To set the tiles the slightest degree more in order upon a cottage

[1] [To Ruskin, who was there in 1840, "a terrific memory": see *Præterita*, ii. § 30.]

roof; to insist upon the vine-leaves at the window, and let the shadow which fell from them naturally conceal the rent in the wall; to draw all the flowers in the foreground, and miss the weeds; to draw all the folds of the white clouds, and miss those of the black ones; to mark the graceful branches of the trees, and, in one way or another, beguile the eye from those which were ungainly; to give every peasant-girl whose face was visible the expression of an angel, and every one whose back was turned the bearing of a princess; finally, to give a general look of light, clear organization and serene vitality to every feature in the landscape; — such were his artifices, and such his delights. It was impossible not to sympathise deeply with the spirit of such a painter; and it was just cause for gratitude to be permitted to travel, as it were, through Italy with such a friend. But his work had, nevertheless, its stern limitations and marks of everlasting inferiority. Always soothing and pathetic, it could never be sublime, never perfectly nor entrancingly beautiful; for the narrow spirit of correction could not cast itself fully into any scene; the calm cheerfulness which shrank from the shadow of the cypress and the distortion of the olive, could not enter into the brightness of the sky that they pierced, nor the softness of the bloom that they bore: for every sorrow that his heart turned from, he lost a consolation; for every fear which he dared not confront, he lost a portion of his hardness; the unsceptred sweep of the storm-clouds, the fair freedom of glancing shower and flickering sunbeam, sank into sweet rectitudes and decent formalisms; and, before eyes that refused to be dazzled or darkened, the hours of sunset wreathed their rays unheeded, and the mists of the Apennines spread their blue veils in vain.

§ 7. To this inherent shortcoming and narrowness of reach the farther defect was added, that this work gave no useful representation of the state of facts in the country which it pretended to contemplate. It was not only wanting in all the higher elements of beauty, but wholly

unavailable for instruction of any kind beyond that which exists in pleasureableness of pure emotion. And considering what cost of labour was devoted to the series of drawings, it could not but be matter for grave blame, as well as for partial contempt, that a man of amiable feeling and considerable intellectual power should thus expend his life in the declaration of his own petty pieties and pleasant reveries, leaving the burden of human sorrow unwitnessed, and the power of God's judgments unconfessed; and, while poor Italy lay wounded and moaning at his feet, pass by, in priestly calm, lest the whiteness of his decent vesture should be spotted with unhallowed blood.

§ 8. Of several other forms of Purism I shall have to speak hereafter, more especially of that exhibited in the landscapes of the early religious painters;[1] but these examples are enough, for the present, to show the general principle that the purist ideal, though in some measure true, in so far as it springs from the true longings of an earnest mind, is yet necessarily in many things deficient or blameable, and *always* an indication of some degree of weakness in the mind pursuing it. But, on the other hand, it is to be noted that entire scorn of this purist ideal is the sign of a far greater weakness. Multitudes of petty artists, incapable of any noble sensation whatever, but acquainted, in a dim way, with the technicalities of the schools, mock at the art whose depths they cannot fathom, and whose motives they cannot comprehend, but of which they can easily detect the imperfections, and deride the simplicities. Thus poor fumigatory Fuseli, with an art composed of the tinsel of the stage and the panics of the nursery, speaks contemptuously of the name of Angelico as "dearer to sanctity than to art."[2] And a large portion of the resistance to the noble Pre-Raphaelite movement of our own days has been offered by men who suppose the

[1] [See below, ch. xviii. §§ 11, 12, pp. 393–394.]

[2] [The reference is apparently to Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters*, new edition by Fuseli, 1805, where Fra Angelico is dismissed as "as much (if not more) respected for his piety as for his painting."]

entire function of the artist in this world to consist in laying on colour with a large brush, and surrounding dashes of flake white with bituminous brown; men whose entire capacities of brain, soul, and sympathy, applied industriously to the end of their lives, would not enable them, at last, to paint so much as one of the leaves of the nettles at the bottom of Hunt's picture of the Light of the World.*

§ 9. It is finally to be remembered, therefore, that Purism is always noble when it is *instinctive*. It is not the greatest thing that can be done, but it is probably the greatest thing that the man who does it can do, provided it comes from his heart. True, it is a sign of weakness, but it is not in our choice whether we will be weak or strong; and there is a certain strength which can only be made perfect in weakness. If he is working in humility, fear of evil, desire of beauty, and sincere purity of purpose and thought, he will produce good and helpful things; but he must be much on his guard against supposing himself to be greater than his fellows, because he has shut himself into this calm and cloistered sphere. His only safety lies in knowing himself to be, on the contrary, *less* than his fellows, and in always striving, so far as he can find it in his heart, to extend his delicate narrowness towards the great naturalist ideal. The whole group of modern German purists have lost themselves, because they founded their work not on humility, nor on religion, but on small self-conceit. Incapable of understanding the great Venetians, or any other masters of true imaginative power, and having fed what mind they had with weak poetry and false philosophy, they thought themselves the best and greatest of artistic mankind, and expected to found a new school of painting in pious plagiarism and delicate pride. It is difficult at first to

* Not that the Pre-Raphaelite is a purist movement, it is stern naturalist; but its unfortunate opposers, who neither know what nature is nor what purism is, have mistaken the simple nature for morbid purism, and therefore cried out against it.

decide which is the more worthless, the spiritual affectation of the petty German, or the composition and chiaroscuro of the petty Englishman; on the whole, however, the latter have lightest weight, for the pseudo-religious painter must, at all events, pass much of his time in meditation upon solemn subjects, and in examining venerable models; and may sometimes even cast a little useful reflected light, or touch the heart with a pleasant echo.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE TRUE IDEAL:—SECONDLY, NATURALIST

1. We now enter on the consideration of that central and highest branch of ideal art which concerns itself simply with things as they ARE, and accepts, in all of them, alike the evil and the good. The question is, therefore, how the art which represents things simply as they are, can be called ideal at all. How does it meet that requirement stated in Chap. III. § 24, as imperative on all great art, that it shall be inventive, and a product of the imagination? It meets it pre-eminently by that power of arrangement which I have endeavoured, at great length and with great pains, to define accurately in the chapter on Imagination associative in the second volume.[1] That is to say, accepting the weaknesses, faults, and wrongnesses in all things that it sees, it so places and harmonizes them that they form a noble whole, in which the imperfection of each several part is not only harmless, but absolutely essential, and yet in which whatever is good in each several part shall be completely displayed.

§ 2. This operation of true idealism holds, from the least things to the greatest. For instance, in the arrangement of the smallest masses of colour, the false idealist, or even the purist, depends upon perfecting each separate hue, and raises them all, as far as he can, into costly brilliancy; but the naturalist takes the coarsest and feeblest colours of the things around him, and so interweaves and opposes them that they become more lovely than if they had all been bright. So in the treatment of the human form. The naturalist will take it as he finds it; but, with such examples as his picture may rationally admit of more or less

[1] [In this edition, Vol. IV. pp. 229–248.]

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exalted beauty, he will associate inferior forms, so as not only to set off those which are most beautiful, but to bring out clearly what good there is in the inferior forms themselves; finally using such measure of absolute evil as there is commonly in nature, both for teaching and for contrast.

In Tintoret's Adoration of the Magi,[1] the Madonna is not an enthroned queen, but a fair girl, full of simplicity and almost childish sweetness. To her are opposed (as Magi) two of the noblest and most thoughtful of the Venetian senators in extreme old age,—the utmost manly dignity, in its decline, being set beside the utmost feminine simplicity, in its dawn. The steep foreheads and refined features of the nobles are, again, opposed to the head of a negro servant, and of an Indian; both, however, noble of their kind. On the other side of the picture, the delicacy of the Madonna is farther enhanced by contrast with a largely made farm-servant, leaning on a basket. All these figures are in repose; outside, the troop of the attendants of the Magi is seen coming up at the gallop.

§ 3. I bring forward this picture, observe, not as an example of the ideal in conception of religious subject, but of the general ideal treatment of the human form; in which the peculiarity is, that the beauty of each figure is displayed to the utmost, while yet, taken separately, the Madonna is an unaltered portrait of a Venetian girl, the Magi are unaltered Venetian senators, and the figure with the basket, an unaltered market-woman of Mestre.

And the greater the master of the ideal, the more perfectly true in *portraiture* will his individual figures be always found, the more subtle and bold his arts of harmony and contrast. This is a universal principle, common to all great art. Consider, in Shakspere, how Prince Henry is opposed to Falstaff, Falstaff to Shallow, Titania to Bottom, Cordelia to Regan, Imogen to Cloten, and so on;[2] while all

[1] [In the Scuola di San Rocco: see Vol. XI. p. 406; see also below, ch. ix. § 18, and vol. iv. ch. ii. § 9 *n.*, ch. iv. § 15. Ruskin's copies and studies from this picture are in Vol. IV., opposite pp. 248, 288, 332.]

[2] [Compare the other instances given above, p. 57.]

the meaner idealists disdain the naturalism, and are shocked at the contrasts. The fact is, a man who can see truth at all, sees it wholly, and neither desires nor dares to mutilate it.

§ 4. It is evident that *within* this faithful idealism, and as one branch of it only, will arrange itself the representation of the human form and mind in perfection, when this perfection is rationally to be supposed or introduced,—that is to say, in the highest personages of the story. The careless habit of confining the term "ideal" to such representations, and not understanding the imperfect ones to be *equally* ideal in their place, has greatly added to the embarrassment and multiplied the errors of artists.* Thersites is just as ideal as Achilles, and Alecto as Helen; and, what is more, all the nobleness of the beautiful ideal depends upon its being just as probable and natural as the ugly one, and having in itself, occasionally or partially, both faults and familiarities. If the next painter who desires to illustrate the character of Homer's Achilles, would represent him cutting pork chops for Ulysses,† he would enable the public to understand the Homeric ideal better than they have done for several centuries. For it is to be kept in mind that the *naturalist ideal* has always in it, to the full, the power expressed by those two words. It is naturalist, because studied from nature, and ideal, because it is mentally arranged in a certain manner. Achilles must be represented cutting pork chops, because that was one of the things which the nature of Achilles involved his doing: he could not be shown wholly as Achilles, if he were not shown doing that. But he shall do it at such time and place as Homer chooses.

§ 5. Now, therefore, observe the main conclusions which follow from these two conditions, attached always to art of

* The word "ideal" is used in this limited sense in the chapter on Generic Beauty in the second volume, but under protest. See § 4 in that chapter.

† *Il.* ix. 209.

this kind. First, it is to be taken straight from nature: it is to be the plain narration of something the painter or writer saw. Herein is the chief practical difference between the higher and lower artists; a difference which I feel more and more every day that I give to the study of art. All the great men *see* what they paint before they paint it,—see it in a perfectly passive manner,—cannot help seeing it if they would; whether in their mind's eye, or in bodily fact, does not matter; very often the mental vision is, I believe, in men of imagination, clearer than the bodily one; but vision it is, of one kind or another,—the whole scene, character, or incident passing before them as in second sight, whether they will or no, and requiring them to paint it as they see it; they not daring, under the might of its presence, to alter* one jot or tittle of it as they write it down or paint it down; it being to them in its own kind and degree always a true vision or Apocalypse, and invariably accompanied in their hearts by a feeling correspondent to the words,—"Write the things *which thou hast seen*, and the things which *are*."[1]

And the whole power, whether of painter or poet, to describe rightly what we call an ideal thing, depends upon its being thus, to him, not an ideal, but a *real* thing. No man ever did or ever will work well, but either from actual sight or sight of faith; and all that we call ideal in Greek or any other art, because to us it is false and visionary, was, to the makers of it, true and existent. The heroes of Phidias are simply representations of such noble human persons as he every day saw, and the gods of Phidias simply representations of such noble divine persons as he thoroughly believed to exist, and did in mental vision truly behold. Hence I said in the second preface to the *Seven Lamps of*

* "And yet you have just said it shall be at such time and place as Homer chooses. Is not this *altering?*" No; wait a little, and read on.

[1] [Revelation i. 19.]

Architecture: "All great art represents something that it sees or believes in;—nothing unseen or uncredited."[1]

§ 6. And just because it is always something that it sees or believes in, there is the peculiar character above noted, almost unmistakable, in all high and true ideals, of having been as it were studied from the life, and involving pieces of sudden familiarity, and close *specific* painting which never would have been admitted or even thought of, had not the painter drawn either from the bodily life or from the life of faith. For instance, Dante's centaur, Chiron, dividing his beard with his arrow before he can speak,[2] is a thing that no mortal would ever have thought of, if he had not actually seen the centaur do it. They might have composed handsome bodies of men and horses in all possible ways, through a whole life of pseudo-idealism, and yet never dreamed of any such thing. But the real living centaur actually trotted across Dante's brain, and he saw him do it.

§ 7. And on account of this reality it is, that the great idealists venture into all kinds of what, to the pseudo-idealists, are "vulgarities." Nay, *venturing* is the wrong word; the great men have no choice in the matter; they do not know or care whether the things they describe are vulgarities or not. They *saw* them; they are the facts of the case. If they had merely composed what they describe, they would have had it at their will to refuse this circumstance or add that. But they did not compose it. It came to them ready fashioned; they were too much impressed by it to think what was vulgar or not vulgar in it. It might be a very wrong thing in a centaur to have so much beard; but so it was. And, therefore, among the various ready tests of true greatness there is not any more certain than this daring reference to, or use of, mean and little things—mean and little, that is, to mean and little minds; but, when used by the great men, evidently part of the noble whole which is authoritatively present before them.

[1] [Vol. VIII. p. 11.]

[2] [*Inferno*, xii. 77–80. With what is said here, compare Vol. VI. p. 42.]

Thus, in the highest poetry, as partly above noted in the first chapter,[1] there is no word so familiar but a great man will bring good out of it, or rather, it will bring good to him, and answer some end for which no other word would have done equally well.[2]

§ 8. A common person, for instance, would be mightily puzzled to apply the word "whelp" to any one, with a view of flattering him. There is a certain freshness and energy in the term, which gives it agreeableness; but it seems difficult, at first hearing, to use it complimentarily. If the person spoken of be a prince, the difficulty seems increased; and when, farther, he is at one and the same moment to be called a "whelp" and contemplated as a hero, it seems that a common idealist might well be brought to a pause. But hear Shakspere do it:—

> "Awake his warlike spirit,
> And your great uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
> Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
> Making defeat on the full power of France,
> While his most mighty father on a hill
> Stood smiling, to behold his lion's whelp
> Forage in blood of French nobility." [3]

So a common idealist would have been rather alarmed at the thought of introducing the name of a street in Paris —Straw Street—Rue de Fouarre—into the midst of a description of the highest heavens. Not so Dante,—

> "Beyond thou mayst the flaming lustre scan
> Of Isidore, of Bede, and that Richart
> Who was in contemplation more than man.

[1] [See especially p. 30.]

[2] [With § 7 here, on the involuntariness of true vision, compare *Queen of the Air*, § 17, where Ruskin uses the word "involuntary," more in the sense, however, of "inevitable"; the exercise of the imagination, that is to say, is voluntary, but the imagination then records passively what it sees. See *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 221–222), where Ruskin distinguishes between the morbid (and "involuntary") action of the imagination and its healthy use. On the involuntariness of true imagination in the sense here meant, see again below, §§ 10, 12. The point is made clear by a passage in *Ethics of the Dust* (Preface to ed. 2, § 3), where Ruskin distinguishes between deliberately composed metaphors and "the real powers of vision" (inevitable and involuntary) of true poets. Compare also *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 42).]

[3] [*Henry V.*, i. 2.]

And he, from whom thy looks returning are
To me, a spirit was, that in austere
Deep musings often thought death kept too far.
That is the light eternal of Sigier,
Who while in Rue de Fouarre his days he wore,
Has argued hateful truths in haughtiest ear." [1]—CAYLEY.

What did it matter to Dante, up in heaven there, whether the mob below thought him vulgar or not? Sigier *had* read in Straw Street; that was the fact, and he had to say so, and there an end.

§ 9. There is, indeed, perhaps, no greater sign of innate and *real* vulgarity of mind or defective education than the want of power to understand the universality of the ideal truth; the absence of sympathy with the colossal grasp of those intellects, which have in them so much of divine, that nothing is small to them, and nothing large; but with equal and unoffended vision they take in the sum of the world,—Straw Street and the seventh heaven,—in the same instant. A certain portion of this divine spirit is visible even in the lower examples of all the true men; it is, indeed, perhaps, the clearest test of their belonging to the true and great group, that they are continually touching what to the multitude appear vulgarities. The higher a man stands, the more the word "vulgar" becomes unintelligible to him. Vulgar? what, that poor farmer's girl of William Hunt's, bred in the stable, putting on her Sunday gown, and pinning her best cap out of the green and red pin-cushion![2] Not so; she may be straight on the road to those high heavens, and may shine hereafter as one of the stars in the firmament for ever. Nay, even that lady in the satin bodice with her arm laid over a balustrade to show it, and her eyes turned up to heaven to show them; and the sportsman waving his rifle for the terror of beasts, and displaying his perfect dress for the delight of men, are kept, by the very misery and vanity of them, in the thoughts

[1] [*Paradiso*, x. 125–134.]
[2] [For another notice of this drawing—known as "Sunday Morning"—see *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Preface, § 12.]

of a great painter, at a sorrowful level, somewhat above vulgarity. It is only when the minor painter takes them on his easel, that they become things for the universe to be ashamed of.

We may dismiss this matter of vulgarity in plain and few words, at least as far as regards art. There is never vulgarity in a *whole* truth, however commonplace. It may be unimportant or painful. It cannot be vulgar. Vulgarity is only in concealment of truth, or in affectation.[1]

§ 10. "Well, but," (at this point the reader asks doubtfully,) "if then your great central idealist is to show all truth, low as well as lovely, receiving it in this passive way, what becomes of all your principles of selection, and of setting in the right place, which you were talking about up to the end of your fourth paragraph? How is Homer to enforce upon Achilles the cutting of the pork chops 'only at such time as Homer chooses,' if Homer is to have *no* choice, but merely to see the thing done, and sing it as he sees it?" Why, the choice, as well as the vision is *manifested* to Homer. The vision comes to him in its chosen order. Chosen *for* him, not *by* him, but yet full of visible and exquisite choice, just as a sweet and perfect dream will come to a sweet and perfect person, so that, in some sense, they may be said to have chosen their dream or composed it; and yet they could not help dreaming it so, and in no otherwise. Thus, exactly thus, in all results of true inventive power, the whole harmony of the thing done seems as if it had been wrought by the most exquisite rules. But to him who did it, it presented itself so, and his will, and knowledge, and personality, for the moment went for nothing; he became simply a scribe, and wrote what he heard and saw.

And all efforts to do things of a similar kind by rule or by thought, and all efforts to mend or rearrange the first order of the vision, are not inventive; on the contrary,

[1] [For a fuller discussion of vulgarity, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii.; and compare the definition of it in *Sesame and Lilies*, § 28, as "want of sensation"; and in *Academy Notes*, 1859, as a combination of "insensibility with insincerity."]

they ignore and deny invention. If any man, seeing certain forms laid on the canvas, does by his reasoning power determine that certain changes wrought in them would mend or enforce them, that is not only uninventive, but contrary to invention, which must be the involuntary occurrence of certain forms or fancies to the mind in the order they are to be portrayed. Thus the knowing of rules and the exertion of judgment have a tendency to check and confuse the fancy in its flow; so that it will follow, that, in exact proportion as a master knows anything about rules of right and wrong, he is likely to be uninventive; and, in exact proportion as he holds higher rank and has nobler inventive power, he will know less of rules; not despising them, but simply feeling that between him and them there is nothing in common,—that dreams cannot be ruled—that as they come, so they must be caught, and they cannot be caught in any other shape than that they come in; and that he might as well attempt to rule a rainbow into rectitude, or cut notches in a moth's wing to hold it by, as in any wise attempt to modify, by rule, the forms of the involuntary vision.

§ 11. And this, which by reason we have thus anticipated, is in reality universally so. There is no exception. The great men never know how or why they do things. They have no rules; cannot comprehend the nature of rules;—do not, usually, even know, in what they do, what is best or what is worst: to them it is all the same; something they cannot help saying or doing,—one piece of it as good as another, and none of it (it seems to *them*) worth much. The moment any man begins to talk about rules, in whatsoever art, you may know him for a second-rate man; and, if he talks about them *much*, he is a third-rate, or not an artist at all. To *this* rule there is no exception in any art; but it is perhaps better to be illustrated in the art of music than in that of painting. I fell by chance the other day upon a work of De Stendhal's, *Vies de Haydn, de Mozart, et de Metastase*, fuller of common sense than any

book I ever read on the arts;[1] though I see by the slight references made occasionally to painting, that the author's knowledge therein is warped and limited by the elements of general teaching in the schools around him; and I have not yet, therefore, looked at what he has separately written on painting. But one or two passages out of this book on music are closely to our present purpose.

"Counterpoint is related to mathematics: a fool, with patience, becomes a respectable savant in that; but for the part of genius, melody, it has no rules. No art is so utterly deprived of precepts for the production of the beautiful. So much the better for it and for us. Cimarosa, when first at Prague his air was executed, Pria che spunti in ciel l'Aurora, never heard the pedants say to him, 'Your air is fine, because you have followed such and such a rule established by Pergolesi in such an one of his airs; but it would be finer still if you had conformed yourself to such another rule from which Galuppi never deviated."

Yes: "so much the better for it, and for us;" but I trust the time will soon come when melody in painting will be understood, no less than in music, and when people will find that, there also, the great melodists have no rules, and cannot have any, and that there are in this, as in sound, "no precepts for the production of the beautiful."

§ 12. Again. "Behold, my friend, an example of that simple way of answering which embarrasses much. One asked him (Haydn) the *reason* for a harmony—for a passage's being assigned to one instrument rather than another; but all he ever answered was, 'I have done it, because it does well.'" Farther on, De Stendhal relates an anecdote of

[1] [The book by De Stendhal (pseudonym of Henri Beyle, 1783–1842) was first published in 1814, under a different title and pseudonym, and was translated into English in 1817—*The Life of Haydn in a series of Letters written at Vienna, followed by a Life of Mozart, with Observations on Metastasio,* translated (by W. Gardiner) from the French of L. A. C. Bombet. Another edition, under the title given in the text, was included in a complete edition of De Stendhal's works in 1854. Ruskin read the book at Geneva in 1854, and made many notes on it in his diary; compare the "Lectures on Colour," Vol. XII. pp. 500–501, where the last of the passages here given (§ 12, below) is again cited. The quotations here (translated by Ruskin from the 1854 edition) are at pp. 168, 74, and 122–123 (in the 1817 English edition, pp. 273–274, 108, 187–188.]

Haydn; I believe one well known, but so much to our purpose that I repeat it. Haydn had agreed to give some lessons in counterpoint to an English nobleman. "'For our first lesson,' said the pupil, already learned in the art —drawing at the same time a quatuor of Haydn's from his pocket, 'for our first lesson may we examine this quatuor; and will you tell me the reasons of certain modulations, which I cannot entirely approve because they are contrary to the principles?' Haydn, a little surprised, declared himself ready to answer. The nobleman began; and at the very first measures found matter for objection. Haydn, *who invented habitually*, and who was the contrary of a pedant, found himself much embarrassed, and answered always, 'I have done that because it has a good effect. I put that passage there because it does well.' The Englishman, who judged that these answers proved nothing, recommenced his proofs, and demonstrated to him, by very good reasons, that this quatuor was good for nothing. 'But, my lord, arrange this quatuor then to your fancy,—play it so, and you will see which of the two ways is the best.' 'But why is yours the best which is contrary to the rules?' 'Because it is the pleasantest.' The nobleman replied. Haydn at last lost patience, and said, 'I see, my lord, it is you who have the goodness to give lessons to me, and truly I am forced to confess to you that I do not deserve the honour.' The partizan of the rules departed, still astonished that in following the rules to the letter one cannot infallibly produce a 'Matrimonio Segreto.'"

This anecdote, whether in all points true or not, is in its tendency most instructive, except only in that it makes *one* false inference or admission, namely, that a good composition can be *contrary* to the rules. It may be contrary to certain principles, supposed in ignorance to be general; but every great composition is in perfect harmony with all true rules, and involves thousands too delicate for ear, or eye, or thought, to trace; still it is possible to reason, with infinite pleasure and profit, about these principles, when the

thing is once done; only, all our reasoning will not enable any one to do another thing like it, because all reasoning falls infinitely short of the divine instinct. Thus we may reason wisely over the way a bee builds its comb, and be profited by finding out certain things about the angles of it. But the bee knows nothing about those matters. It builds its comb in a far more inevitable way. And, from a bee to Paul Veronese, all master-workers work with this awful, this inspired unconsciousness.

§ 13. I said just now that there was no exception to *this* law, that the great men never knew how or why they did things. It is, of course, only with caution that such a broad statement should be made; but I have seen much of different kinds of artists, and I have always found the knowledge of, and attention to, rules so *accurately* in the inverse ratio to the power of the painter, that I have myself no doubt that the law is constant, and that men's smallness may be trigonometrically estimated by the attention which, in their work, they pay to principles, especially principles of composition. The general way in which the great men speak is of "*trying* to do" this or that, just as a child would tell of something he had seen and could not utter. Thus, in speaking of the drawing of which I have given an etching farther on (a scene on the St. Gothard*), Turner asked if I had been to see "that litter of stones which I *endeavoured* to represent;" and William Hunt, when I asked him one day as he was painting, why he put on such and such a colour, answered, "I don't know; I am just *aiming* at it;"[1] and Turner, and he, and all the other men I have known who could paint, always spoke

* See Plate 21, in chap. iii. vol. iv.

[1] [In his diary of 1854, referring to Haydn's definition of harmony without melody as "bruit bien travaillé," Ruskin records this conversation a little more fully:—

"Compare Hunt's answers to my questions why he did this or that, 'Well, I don't know'—(and saying so, he lifted his head, and looked at the thing, as if the idea had just struck him that there might be a reason)—'I don't know, I'm just aimin' at it; and again: 'Well, I think a little burnt sienna would be very *desirable* there.'"

Compare Vol. XII. p. 500.]

and speak in the same way; not in any selfish restraint of their knowledge, but in pure simplicity. While all the men whom I know, who *cannot* paint, are ready with admirable reasons for everything they have done; and can show, in the most conclusive way, that Turner is wrong, and how he might be improved.

§ 14. And this is the reason for the somewhat singular, but very palpable truth that the Chinese, and Indians, and other semi-civilized nations, can colour better than we do,[1] and that an Indian shawl and China vase are still, in invention of colour, inimitable by us. It is their glorious ignorance of all rules that does it; the pure and true instincts have play, and do their work,—instincts so subtle, that the least warping or compression breaks or blunts them; and the moment we begin teaching people any rules about colour, and make them do this or that, we crush the instinct, generally for ever. Hence, hitherto, it has been an actual necessity, in order to obtain power of colouring, that a nation should be half savage: everybody could colour in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; but we were ruled and legalized into grey in the fifteenth;—only a little salt simplicity of their sea natures at Venice still keeping their precious, shell-fishy purpleness and power; and now that is gone; and nobody can colour anywhere, except the Hindoos and Chinese; but that need not be so, and will not be so long; for, in a little while, people will find out their mistake, and give up talking about rules of colour, and then everybody will colour again, as easily as they now talk.

§ 15. Such, then, being the generally passive or instinctive character of right invention,[2] it may be asked how these unmanageable instincts are to be rendered practically serviceable in historical or poetical painting,—especially historical, in which given facts are to be represented. Simply by the sense and self-control of the whole

[1] [Compare on this subject *The Two Paths*, § 3 *seq.*]

[2] [On the place of invention in art, see, among other passages, ch. xvi. § 26; *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. i. § 20, ch. iv. § 16; and *Eagle's Nest*, § 140.]

man; not by control of the particular fancy or vision. He who habituates himself, in his daily life, to seek for the stern facts in whatever he hears or sees, will have these facts again brought before him by the involuntary imaginative power in their noblest associations; and he who seeks for frivolities and fallacies, will have frivolities and fallacies again presented to him in his dreams.[1] Thus if, in reading history for the purpose of painting from it, the painter severely seeks for the accurate circumstances of every event; as, for instance, determining the exact spot of ground on which his hero fell, the way he must have been looking at the moment, the height the sun was at (by the hour of the day), and the way in which the light must have fallen upon his face, the actual number and individuality of the persons by him at the moment, and such other veritable details, ascertaining and dwelling upon them without the slightest care for any desirableness or poetic propriety in them, but for their own truth's sake; then these truths will afterwards rise up and form the body of his imaginative vision, perfected and united as his inspiration may teach. But if, in reading the history, he does not regard these facts, but thinks only how it might all most prettily, and properly, and impressively have happened, then there is nothing but prettiness and propriety to form the body of his future imagination, and his whole ideal becomes false.[2] So, in the

[1] [The passage "He who habituates himself . . ." down to ". . . in his dreams" is § 7 in *Frondes Agrestes*, where Ruskin adds the following note:—

"Very good. Few people have any idea how much more important the government of the mind is, than the force of its exertion. Nearly all the world flog their horses, without ever looking where they are going."]

[2] [In an earlier draft of this chapter Ruskin gives some particular instances:—

"The only valuable historical painting is the sincere effort of good painters to paint the great men and interesting events of their own time, or of a time so little distant as to enable them thoroughly to conceive it. Paul Delaroche's 'Napoleon crossing the St. Bernard' comes nearer in conception to the ideal of a true historical picture than anything done in art yet; but then it is ill-painted—ill-coloured, that is (which, strictly speaking, deprives it of the rank of a picture at all). So also some of Horace Vernet's scenes in the French African campaigns; only these, it appeared to me, were of subjects with no interest or nobleness in them—chosen to display the painter's power of throwing the body into different positions—egotism still defeating itself, as in old times, and lowering the rank of the

higher or expressive part of the work, the whole virtue of it depends on his being able to quit his own personality, and enter successively into the hearts and thoughts of each person; and in all this he is still passive: in gathering the truth he is passive, not determining what the truth to be gathered shall be, and in the after vision he is passive, not determining, but as his dreams will have it, what the truth to be represented shall be; only according to his own nobleness is his power of entering into the hearts of noble persons, and the general character of his dream of them.*

§ 16. It follows from all this, evidently, that a great idealist never can be egotistic. The whole of his power depends upon his losing sight and feeling of his own existence, and becoming a mere witness and mirror of truth, and a scribe of visions,—always passive in sight, passive in utterance, — lamenting continually that he cannot completely reflect nor clearly utter all he has seen—not by any means a proud state for a man to be in. But the man who has no invention is always setting things in order, and putting the world to rights, and mending, and beautifying, and pluming himself on his doings as supreme in all ways.[1]

§ 17. There is still the question open, What are the principal directions in which this ideal faculty is to exercise itself most usefully for mankind?

* The reader should, of course, refer for fuller details on this subject to the chapters on Imagination in vol. ii., of which I am only glancing now at the practical results.

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whole work. English art, as far as I know, has never yet produced an historical picture; West is too feeble an artist to permit his designs to be mentioned as pictures at all—otherwise his 'Death of General Wolfe' might have been named as an approximation of the thing needed."

Delaroche's picture was exhibited in 1848, in which year Ruskin was in Paris. Horace Vernet's are at Versailles. West's "Death of Wolfe" is at Grosvenor House.]

[1] [§ 16 here is § 5 in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), where Ruskin adds the following note :—

"I am now a comic illustration of this sentence myself. I have not a ray of invention in all my brains; but am intensely rational and orderly, and have resolutely begun to set the world to rights."]

This question, however, is not to the purpose of our present work, which respects landscape-painting only; it must be one of those left open to the reader's thoughts, and for future inquiry in another place.[1] One or two essential points I briefly notice.

In Chap. vi. § 5 it was said, that one of the first functions of imagination was traversing the scenes of history, and forcing the facts to become again visible. But there is so little of such force in written history, that it is no marvel there should be none hitherto in painting. There does not exist, as far as I know, in the world a single example of a good historical picture (that is to say, of one which, allowing for necessary dimness in art as compared with nature, yet answers nearly the same ends in our minds as the sight of the real event would have answered); the reason being, the universal endeavour to get *effects* instead of facts, already shown as the root of false idealism. True historical ideal, founded on sense, correctness of knowledge, and purpose of usefulness, does not yet exist; the production of it is a task which the closing nineteenth century may propose to itself.[2]

§ 18. Another point is to be observed. I do not, as the reader may have lately perceived, insist on the distinction between historical and poetical painting, because, as noted in the 22nd paragraph of the third chapter, all great painting must be both.

Nevertheless, a certain distinction must generally exist between men who, like Horace Vernet, David, or Domenico Tintoret,[3] would employ themselves in painting, more or less graphically, the outward verities of passing events—battles, councils, etc.—of their day (who, supposing them to work worthily of their mission, would become, properly so called, historical or narrative painters); and

[1] [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 6; *Lectures on Art*, § 30.]

[2] [On this subject compare Vol. IV. p. 382.]

[3] [For this painter, to be distinguished from his illustrious father, see Vol. XI. p. 373. For Vernet (1789–1863), see above, p. 124 *n.*; for David, Vol. XII. p. 398.]

men who sought, in scenes of perhaps less outward importance, "noble grounds for noble emotions;"[1]—who would be, in a certain separate sense, *poetical* painters, some of them taking for subjects events which had actually happened, and others themes from the poets; or, better still, becoming poets themselves in the entire sense, and inventing the story as they painted it. Painting seems to me only just to be beginning, in this sense also, to take its proper position beside literature, and the pictures of the "Awakening Conscience," "Huguenot," and such others, to be the first fruits of its new effort.[2]

§ 19. Finally, as far as I can observe, it is a constant law that the greatest men, whether poets or historians, live entirely in their own age, and that the greatest fruits of their work are gathered out of their own age. Dante paints Italy in the thirteenth century; Chaucer, England in the fourteenth; Masaccio, Florence in the fifteenth; Tintoret, Venice in the sixteenth; all of them utterly regardless of anachronism and minor error of every kind, but getting always vital truth out of the vital present.[3]

§ 20. If it be said that Shakspere wrote perfect historical plays on subjects belonging to the preceding centuries, I answer that they *are* perfect plays just because there is no care about centuries in them, but a life which all men recognize for the human life of all time; and this it is, not because Shakspere sought to give universal truth, but because, painting honestly and completely from the men about him, he painted that human nature which is indeed constant enough,—a rogue in the fifteenth century being, *at heart*, what a rogue is in the nineteenth and was in the twelfth; and an honest or a knightly man being, in like manner, very similar to other such at any other time. And the work of these great idealists is, therefore, always universal; not because it is *not portrait*, but because it is

[1] [See above, p. 28.]
[2] [For these pictures, see Vol. XII. p. 333; Vol. XI. p. 59.]
[3] [On this subject compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Vol. XII. p. 153.]

complete portrait down to the heart, which is the same in all ages; and the work of the mean idealists is *not* universal, not because it is portrait, but because it is *half* portrait,—of the outside, the manners and the dress, not of the heart. Thus Tintoret and Shakspere paint, both of them, simply Venetian and English nature as they saw it in their time, down to the root; and it does for *all* time; but as for any care to cast themselves into the particular ways and tones of thought, or custom, of past time in their historical work, you will find it in neither of them,[1] nor in any other perfectly great man that I know of.

§ 21. If there had been no vital truth in their present, it is hard to say what these men could have done. I suppose, primarily, they would not have existed; that they, and the matter they have to treat of, are given together, and that the strength of the nation and its historians correlatively rise and fall—Herodotus springing out of the dust of Marathon. It is also hard to say how far our better general acquaintance with minor details of past history may make us able to turn the shadow on the imaginative dial backwards, and naturally to live, and even live strongly if we choose, in past periods; but this main truth will always be unshaken, that the only historical painting deserving the name is portraiture of our own living men and our own passing times,* and that all efforts to summon up the events of bygone periods, though often useful and touching, must come under an inferior class of poetical painting; nor will it, I believe, ever be much followed as their main work by the strongest

* See Edinburgh *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, p. 217. [In this edition, Vol. XII. p. 151.]

[1] [§§ 19, 20 here are § 12 in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), where at this point Ruskin added the following footnote :—

> "What vestige of Egyptian character is there, for instance, in Cleopatra? —of Athenian in Theseus or Timon?—of old British in Imogen or Cordelia? —of old Scottish in Macbeth?—or even of mediæval Italian in Petruchio, the Merchant of Venice, or Desdemona? And the Roman plays appear definitely Roman only because the strength of Rome was the eternal strength of the world,—pure family life, sustained by agriculture, and defended by simple and fearless manhood."

See also *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 30.]

men, but only by the weaker and comparatively sentimental (rather than imaginative) groups. This marvellous first half of the nineteenth century has in this matter, as in nearly all others, been making a double blunder. It has, under the name of improvement, done all it could to EFFACE THE RECORDS which departed ages have left of themselves, while it has declared the FORGERY OF FALSE RECORDS of these same ages to be the great work of its historical painters! I trust that in a few years more we shall come somewhat to our senses in the matter, and begin to perceive that our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves also what shall be true for the future. Let us strive with just veneration for that future, first to do what is worthy to be spoken, and then to speak it faithfully; and, with veneration for the past, recognize that it is indeed in the power of love to preserve the monument, but not of incantation to raise the dead.[1]

[1] [On this subject compare "The Opening of the Crystal Palace," Vol. XII. p. 432.]

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE TRUE IDEAL:—THIRDLY, GROTESQUE

§ 1. I HAVE already, in the *Stones of Venice*, had occasion to analyze, as far as I was able, the noble nature and power of grotesque conception: I am not sorry occasionally to refer the reader to that work, the fact being that it and this are parts of one whole, divided merely as I had occasion to follow out one or other of its branches;[1] for I have always considered architecture as an essential part of landscape; and I think the study of its best styles and real meaning one of the necessary functions of the landscape-painter; as, in like manner, the architect cannot be a master-workman until all his designs are guided by understanding of the wilder beauty of pure nature.[2] But, be this as it may, the discussion of the grotesque element belonged most properly to the essay on architecture, in which that element must always find its fullest development.

§ 2. The Grotesque is in that chapter* divided principally into three kinds:

(A.) Art arising from healthful but irrational play of the imagination in times of rest.

(B.) Art arising from irregular and accidental contemplation of terrible things; or evil in general.

(C.) Art arising from the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp.

* On the Grotesque Renaissance, vol. iii.[3]

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[1] [See in this connexion the Introduction to Vol. X. p. xlvii.]

[2] [And so, as Ruskin says elsewhere, an architect "should live as little in cities as a painter" (*Seven Lamps*, Vol. VIII. p. 136), and be an all-round artist like Giotto (*Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Preface and § 61, Vol. XII. pp. 8, 85).]

[3] [Ch. iii. In this edition, Vol. XI. pp. 135 *seq.*]

It is the central form of this art, arising from contemplation of evil, which forms the link of connection between it and the sensualist ideals, as pointed out above in the second paragraph of the sixth chapter, the fact being that the imagination, when at play, is curiously like bad children, and likes to play with fire: in its entirely serious moods it dwells by preference on beautiful and sacred images, but in its mocking or playful moods it is apt to jest, sometimes bitterly, with under-current of sternest pathos, sometimes waywardly, sometimes slightly and wickedly, with death and sin; hence an enormous mass of grotesque art, some most noble and useful, as Holbein's Dance of Death,[1] and Albert Dürer's Knight and Death,* going down gradually through various conditions of less and less seriousness into an art whose only end is that of mere excitement, or amusement by terror, like a child making mouths at another, more or less redeemed by the degree of wit or fancy in the grimace it makes, as in the demons of Teniers and such others; and, lower still, in the demonology of the stage.

§ 3. The form arising from an entirely healthful and open play of the imagination, as in Shakspere's Ariel and Titania, and in Scott's White Lady,[2] is comparatively rare. It hardly ever is free from some slight taint of the inclination to evil; still more rarely is it, when so free, natural to the mind; for the moment we begin to contemplate sinless beauty we are apt to get serious; and moral fairy tales, and such other innocent work, are hardly ever truly, that is to say, naturally, imaginative; but for the most part laborious inductions and compositions. The moment any real vitality enters them, they are nearly sure to become

* See Appendix i. vol. iv.: "Modern Grotesque."

[1] [Holbein's "Dance of Death" is again referred to, and is in part described, in *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 53 and 63; for Dürer's "Knight and Death," see *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 172); *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. iv. §§ 10, 16; *Lectures on Art*, § 47; *Catalogue of the Standard Series*, No. 9; *Ariadne Florentina*, § 37, and General Index, under "Dürer."]

[2] [For references to the *Tempest*, see above, p. 57 *n.*; *Time and Tide*, § 68, and *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 51, 65. For other references to *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and for the White Lady of Avenel (*The Monastery*), see General Index.]

satirical, or slightly gloomy, and so connect themselves with the evil-enjoying branch.

§ 4. The third form of the Grotesque is a thoroughly noble one. It is that which arises out of the use or fancy of tangible signs to set forth an otherwise less expressible truth; including nearly the whole range of symbolical and allegorical art and poetry. Its nobleness has been sufficiently insisted upon in the place before referred to. (Chapter on Grotesque Renaissance, §§ LXIII. LXIV., etc.) Of its practical use, especially in painting, deeply despised among us, because grossly misunderstood, a few words must be added here.

A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped by the haste of the imagination, forming the grotesque character.

§ 5. For instance, Spenser desires to tell us, (1) that envy is the most untamable and unappeasable of the passions, not to be soothed by any kindness; (2) that with continual labour it invents evil thoughts out of its own heart; (3) that even in this, its power of doing harm is partly hindered by the decaying and corrupting nature of the evil it lives in; (4) that it looks every way, and that whatever it sees is altered and discoloured by its own nature; (5) which discolouring, however, is to it a veil, or disgraceful dress, in the sight of others; (6) and that it never is free from the most bitter suffering, (7) which cramps all its acts and movements, enfolding and crushing it while it torments. All this it has required a somewhat long and languid sentence for me to say in unsymbolical terms,—not, by the way, that they *are* unsymbolical altogether, for I have been forced, whether I would or not, to use *some* figurative words; but even with this help the sentence is long and tiresome, and does not with any vigour represent the truth

It would take some prolonged enforcement of each sentence to make it felt, in ordinary ways of talking. But Spenser puts it all into a grotesque, and it is done shortly and at once, so that we feel it fully, and see it, and never forget it.[1] I have numbered above the statements which had to be made. I now number them with the same numbers, as they occur in the several pieces of the grotesque:—

"And next to him malicious Envy rode
(1) Upon a ravenous wolfe, and (2, 3) still did chaw
Between his cankred * teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his jaw.
(4, 5) All in a kirtle of discolourd say
He clothed was, y-paynted full of eies;
(6) And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hateful snake, the which his taile uptyes
(7) In many folds, and mortall sting implyes."[2]

There is the whole thing in nine lines; or, rather in one image, which will hardly occupy any room at all on the mind's shelves, but can be lifted out, whole, whenever we want it. All noble grotesques are concentrations of this kind, and the noblest convey truths which nothing else could convey; and not only so, but convey them, in minor cases with a delightfulness,—in the higher instances with an awfulness,—which no mere utterance of the symbolised truth would have possessed, but which belongs to the effort of the mind to unweave the riddle, or to the sense it has of there being an infinite power and meaning in the thing seen, beyond all that is apparent therein, giving the highest sublimity even to the most trivial object so presented and so contemplated.

"'Jeremiah, what seest thou?'
'I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.'
'Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.'"[3]

* Cankred—because he cannot then bite hard.

[1] [Compare the "Lectures on Colour," § 23 (Vol. XII. p. 496), where other examples of the grotesque in Spenser are cited.]

[2] [*Faerie Queene*, book i. canto iv. 30, 31. Compare Vol. X. p. 406, where the lines are again quoted.]

[3] [Jeremiah i. 13, 14.]

And thus in all ages and among all nations, grotesque idealism has been the element through which the most appalling and eventful truth has been wisely conveyed, from the most sublime words of true Revelation, to the "ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἂν ἡμίονος βασιλεύς," etc., of the oracles,[1] and the more or less doubtful teaching of dreams; and so down to ordinary poetry. No element of imagination has a wider range, a more magnificent use, or so colossal a grasp of sacred truth.

§ 6. How, then, is this noble power best to be employed in the art of painting?

We hear it not unfrequently asserted that symbolism or personification should not be introduced in painting at all. Such assertions are in their grounds unintelligible, and in their substance absurd. Whatever is in words described as visible, may with all logical fitness* be rendered so by colours, and not only is this a legitimate branch of ideal art, but I believe there is hardly any other so widely useful and instructive; and I heartily wish that every great allegory which the poets ever invented were powerfully put on canvas, and easily accessible by all men, and that our artists were perpetually exciting themselves to invent more. And as far as authority bears on the question, the simple fact is that allegorical painting has been the delight of the greatest men and of the wisest multitudes, from the beginning of art, and will be till art expires. Orcagna's Triumph of Death; Simon Memmi's frescoes in the Spanish Chapel; Giotto's principal works at Assisi, and partly at the Arena; Michael Angelo's two best statues, the Night and Day; Albert Dürer's noble Melancholy, and hundreds more of his best works; a full third, I should think, of the works of Tintoret and Veronese, and nearly as large a portion of those of Raphael and Rubens, are entirely symbolical or personifiant; and, except in the case of the last-named

* Though, perhaps, only in a subordinate degree. See farther on, § 8.

[1] [Herodotus, i. 55.]

painter, are always among the most interesting works the painters executed.[1] The greater and more thoughtful the artists, the more they delight in symbolism, and the more fearlessly they employ it. Dead symbolism, second-hand symbolism, pointless symbolism, are indeed objectionable enough; but so are most other things that are dead, second-hand, and pointless. It is also true that both symbolism and personification are somewhat more apt than most things to have their edges taken off by too much handling; and what with our modern Fames, Justices, and various metaphorical ideals largely used for signs and other such purposes, there is some excuse for our not well knowing what the real power of personification is. But that power is gigantic and inexhaustible, and ever to be grasped with peculiar joy by the painter, because it permits him to introduce picturesque elements and flights of fancy into his work, which otherwise would be utterly inadmissible;—to bring the wild beasts of the desert into the room of state, fill the air with inhabitants as well as the earth, and render the least (visibly) interesting incidents themes for the most thrilling drama. Even Tintoret might sometimes have been hard put to it, when he had to fill a large panel in the Ducal Palace with the portrait of a nowise interesting Doge, unless he had been able to lay a winged lion beside him, ten feet long from the nose to the tail, asleep upon the Turkey carpet;[2] and Rubens could certainly have made his flatteries of Mary of Medici palatable to no one but herself, without the help of rosy-cheeked goddesses of abundance, and seven-headed hydras of rebellion.

§ 7. For observe, not only does the introduction of these imaginary beings permit greater fantasticism of *incident*, but also infinite fantasticism of *treatment;* and, I

[1] [On the subject of symbolism and personification in art, compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 377).]

[2] [See Vol. XI. p. 375, and for the Medici Series by Rubens, in the Louvre, Vol. XII. p. 473, and *Harbours of England*, § 30 *n.*]

believe, so far from the pursuit of the false ideal having in any wise exhausted the realms of fantastic imagination, those realms have hardly yet been entered, and that a universe of noble dream-land lies before us, yet to be conquered. For, hitherto, when fantastic creatures have been introduced, either the masters have been so realistic in temper that they made the spirits as substantial as their figures of flesh and blood,—as Rubens, and, for the most part, Tintoret; or else they have been weak and unpractised in realization, and have painted transparent or cloudy spirits because they had no power of painting grand ones. But if a really great painter, thoroughly capable of giving substantial truth, and master of the elements of pictorial effect which have been developed by modern art, would solemnly, and yet fearlessly, cast his fancy free in the spiritual world, and faithfully follow out such masters of that world as Dante and Spenser, there seems no limit to the splendour of thought which painting might express. Consider, for instance, how the ordinary personifications of Charity oscillate between the mere nurse of many children, of Reynolds, and the somewhat painfully conceived figure with flames issuing from the heart, of Giotto;[1] and how much more significance might be given to the representative of Love, by amplifying with tenderness the thought of Dante, "Tanto rossa, Che a pena fora dentro al foco nota,"* that is to say, by representing the loveliness of her face and form as all flushed with glow of crimson light, and, as she descended through heaven, all its clouds coloured by her presence as they are by sunset. In the hands of a feeble painter, such an attempt would end in mere caricature; but suppose it taken up by Correggio,

* "So red, that in the midst of the fire she could hardly have been seen."[2]

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[1] [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 397); Reynolds' "Charity" is in the window of New College, Oxford; the study for it is in the University Gallery. For another reference to it see Vol. X. p. 378.]

[2] [*Purgatorio*, xxix. 122–123; quoted again at Vol. X. p. 378.]

adding to his power of flesh-painting the (not inconsistent) feeling of Angelico in design, and a portion of Turner's knowledge of the clouds. There is nothing impossible in such a conjunction as this. Correggio, trained in another school, might have even himself shown some such extent of grasp; and in Turner's picture of the Dragon of the Hesperides, Jason, vignette to Voyage of Columbus ("slowly along the evening sky they went"),[1] and such others, as well as in many of the works of Watts and Rossetti,[2] is already visible, as I trust, the dawn of a new era of art, in a true unison of the grotesque with the realistic power.

§ 8. There is, however, unquestionably, a severe limit, in the case of all inferior masters, to the degree in which they may venture to realize grotesque conception, and partly, also, a limit in the nature of the thing itself; there being many grotesque ideas which may be with safety suggested dimly by words or slight lines, but which will hardly bear being painted into perfect definiteness. It is very difficult, in reasoning on this matter, to divest ourselves of the prejudices which have been forced upon us by the base grotesque of men like Bronzino, who, having no true imagination, are apt, more than others, to try by startling realism to enforce the monstrosity that has no terror in itself. But it is nevertheless true, that, unless in the hands of the very greatest men, the grotesque seems better to be expressed merely in line, or light and shade, or mere abstract colour, so as to mark it for a thought rather than a substantial fact. Even if Albert Dürer had perfectly painted his Knight and Death, I question if we should feel it so great a thought as we do in the dark engraving. Blake, perfectly powerful in the etched grotesque

[1] [For Turner's "Hesperides" (National Gallery, No. 477), see *Notes on the Turner Gallery; Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. x. ("The Nereids' Guard"); and *Lectures on Landscape*, §§ 69–71. For "Jason" (National Gallery, No. 471), and (drawing) No. 461, see *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 259–261). For the Vignette (National Gallery, drawing No. 395)—illustrating the line quoted above from Rogers' *Voyage of Columbus—ibid.*, p. 299.]

[2] [For an earlier reference to Watts, see Vol. XI. p. 30 *n.*; and for earlier references to Rossetti, Vol. XI. p. 36 *n.*, Vol. XII. p. 162.]

of the book of Job, fails always more or less as soon as he adds colour; not merely for want of power (his eye for colour being naturally good), but because his subjects seem, in a sort, insusceptible of completion:[1] and the two inexpressibly noble and pathetic woodcut grotesques of Alfred Rethel's, Death the Avenger, and Death the Friend, could not, I think, but with disadvantage, be advanced into pictorial colour.

And what is thus doubtfully true of the pathetic grotesque, is assuredly and always true of the jesting grotesque. So far as it expresses any transient flash of wit or satire, the less labour of line, or colour, given to its expression the better; elaborate jesting being always intensely painful.

§ 9. For these several reasons, it seems not only permissible, but even desirable, that the art by which the grotesque is expressed should be more or less imperfect, and this seems a most beneficial ordinance, as respects the human race in general. For the grotesque being not only a most forceful instrument of teaching, but a most natural manner of expression, springing as it does at once from any tendency to playfulness in minds highly comprehensive of truth; and being also one of the readiest ways in which such satire or wit as may be possessed by men of any inferior rank of mind can be for perpetuity expressed, it becomes on all grounds desirable that what is suggested in times of play should be rightly sayable without toil; and what occurs to men of inferior power or knowledge, sayable without any high degree of skill. Hence it is an infinite good to mankind when there is full acceptance of the grotesque, slightly sketched or expressed; and, if field for such expression be frankly granted, an enormous mass of intellectual power is turned to everlasting use, which, in

[1] [For Blake, see also below, ch. xvi. § 10 *n.*, p. 323; for his Book of Job, *Art of England*, § 101; and for other references see Vol. VIII. p. 256 *n.* The drawings for a "Dance of Death" by the German artist, Alfred Rethel (1816–1859), are often referred to by Ruskin: see "Lectures on Colour," § 15 (Vol. XII. p. 489); *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. App. 1, § 5; *Elements of Drawing*, App. 2 ("Things to be Studied," 4); and *Art of England*, § 100.]

this present century of ours, evaporates in street gibing or vain revelling; all the good wit and satire expiring in daily talk, (like foam on wine,) which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had a permitted and useful expression in the arts of sculpture and illumination, like foam fixed into chalcedony. It is with a view (not the least important among many others bearing upon art) to the reopening of this great field of human intelligence, long entirely closed, that I am striving to introduce Gothic architecture into daily domestic use; and to revive the art of illumination, properly so called;[1] not the art of miniature-painting in books, or on vellum, which has ridiculously been confused with it; but of making *writing*, simple writing, beautiful to the eye, by investing it with the great chord of perfect colour, blue, purple, scarlet, white, and gold, and in that chord of colour, permitting the continual play of the fancy of the writer in every species of grotesque imagination, carefully excluding shadow; the distinctive difference between illumination and painting proper, being, that illumination admits *no* shadows, but only gradations of pure colour. And it is in this respect that illumination is specially fitted for grotesque expression; for, when I used the term "*pictorial* colour," just now, in speaking of the completion of the grotesque of Death the Avenger, I meant to distinguish such colour from the abstract shadeless hues which are eminently fitted for grotesque thought. The requirement, respecting the slighter grotesque, is only that it shall be *incompletely* expressed. It may have light and shade without colour (as in etching and sculpture), or colour without light and shade (illumination), but must not, except in the hands of the greatest masters, have both. And for some conditions of the playful grotesque, the abstract colour is a much more delightful element of expression than the abstract light and shade.

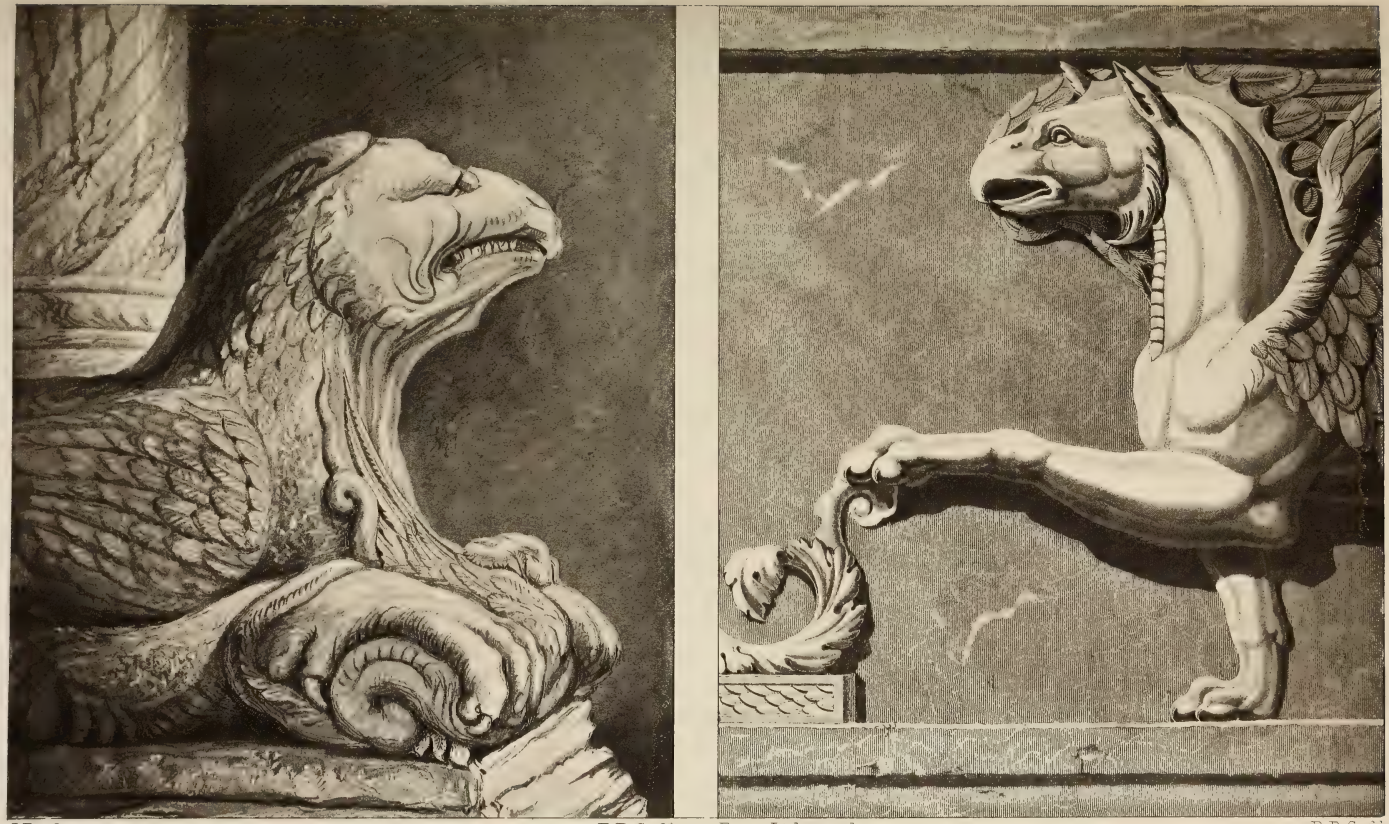
§ 10. Such being the manifold and precious uses of the

[1] [See Vol. XII. p. 483.]

true grotesque, it only remains for us to note carefully how it is to be distinguished from the false and vicious grotesque which results from idleness, instead of noble rest; from malice, instead of the solemn contemplation of necessary evil; and from general degradation of the human spirit, instead of its subjection, or confusion, by thoughts too high for it. It is easy for the reader to conceive how different the fruits of two such different states of mind *must* be; and yet how like in many respects, and apt to be mistaken, one for the other;—how the jest which springs from mere fatuity, and vacant want of penetration or purpose, is everlastingly, infinitely separated from, and yet may sometimes be mistaken for, the bright, playful, fond, farsighted jest of Plato, or the bitter, purposeful, sorrowing jest of Aristophanes;—how, again, the horror which springs from guilty love of foulness and sin, may be often mistaken for the inevitable horror which a great mind must sometimes feel in the full and penetrative sense of their presence;—how, finally, the vague and foolish inconsistencies of undisciplined dream or reverie may be mistaken for the compelled inconsistencies of thoughts too great to be well sustained, or clearly uttered. It is easy, I say, to understand what a difference there must indeed be between these; and yet how difficult it may be always to define it, or lay down laws for the discovery of it, except by the just instinct of minds set habitually in all things to discern right from wrong.

§ 11. Nevertheless, one good and characteristic instance may be of service in marking the leading directions in which the contrast is discernible. On the opposite page, Plate 1, I have put, beside each other, a piece of true grotesque, from the Lombard-Gothic, and of false grotesque from classical (Roman) architecture.[1] They are both griffins: the one on the left carries on his back one of the main

[1] [The griffin from Verona sustains the pillar on the north side of the western entrance; for other references to it, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 439), and *Verona and its Rivers*, § 14. For further remarks on the naturalness of noble grotesque, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (1856), *s.* No. 477 *ad fin.*]



J. Ruskin R. P. Cuff. From Lithograph. R. P. Cuff.

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1. True and False Griffins.

Mediaeval. Classical.

pillars of the porch of the cathedral of Verona; the one on the right is on the frieze of the temple of Antoninus and Faustina at Rome, much celebrated by Renaissance and bad modern architects.

In some respects, however, this classical griffin deserves its reputation. It is exceedingly fine in lines of composition, and, I believe (I have not examined the original closely), very exquisite in execution. For these reasons, it is all the better for our purpose. I do not want to compare the worst false grotesque with the best true, but rather, on the contrary, the best false with the simplest true, in order to see how the delicately wrought lie fails in the presence of the rough truth; for rough truth in the present case it is, the Lombard sculpture being altogether untoward and imperfect in execution.*

§ 12. "Well, but," the reader says, "what do you mean by calling *either* of them true? There never were such beasts in the world as either of these?"

No, never: but the difference is, that the Lombard workman did really see a griffin in his imagination, and carved it from the life, meaning to declare to all ages that he had verily seen with his immortal eyes such a griffin as that; but the classical workman never saw a griffin at all, nor anything else; but put the whole thing together by line and rule.

§ 13. "How do you know that?"

Very easily. Look at the two, and think over them. You know a griffin is a beast composed of lion and eagle. The classical workman set himself to fit these together in the most ornamental way possible. He accordingly carves a sufficiently satisfactory lion's body, then attaches very gracefully cut wings to the sides: then, because he cannot get the eagle's head on the broad lion's shoulders, fits

* If there be any inaccuracy in the right-hand griffin, I am sorry, but am not answerable for it, as the plate has been faithfully reduced from a large French lithograph, the best I could find. The other is from a sketch of my own.

the two together by something like a horse's neck (some griffins being wholly composed of horse and eagle), then, finding the horse's neck look weak and unformidable, he strengthens it by a series of bosses, like vertebræ, in front, and by a series of spiny cusps, instead of a mane, on the ridge; next, not to lose the whole leonine character about the neck, he gives a remnant of the lion's beard, turned into a sort of griffin's whisker, and nicely curled and pointed; then an eye, probably meant to look grand and abstracted, and therefore neither lion's nor eagle's; and, finally, an eagle's beak, very sufficiently studied from a real one. The whole head being, it seems to him, still somewhat wanting in weight and power, he brings forward the right wing behind it, so as to enclose it with a broad line. This is the finest thing in the composition, and very masterly, both in thought, and in choice of the exactly right point where the lines of wing and beak should intersect (and it may be noticed in passing, that all men, who can compose at all, have this habit of encompassing or governing broken lines with broad ones, wherever it is possible, of which we shall see many instances hereafter). The whole griffin, thus gracefully composed, being, nevertheless, when all is done, a very composed griffin, is set to very quiet work, and raising his left foot, to balance his right wing, sets it on the tendril of a flower so lightly as not even to bend it down, though, in order to reach it, his left leg is made half as long again as his right.

§ 14. We may be pretty sure, if the carver had ever seen a griffin, he would have reported of him as doing something else than *that* with his feet. Let us see what the Lombardic workman saw him doing.

Remember, first, the griffin, though part lion and part eagle, has the united *power of both.* He is not merely a bit of lion and a bit of eagle, but whole lion incorporate with whole eagle. So when we really see one, we may be quite sure we shall not find him wanting in anything necessary to the might either of beast or bird.

Well, among things essential to the might of a lion, perhaps, on the whole, the most essential are his *teeth*. He could get on pretty well even without his claws, usually striking his prey down with a blow, woundless; but he could by no means get on without his teeth. Accordingly, we see that the real or Lombardic griffin has the carnivorous teeth bare to the root, and the peculiar hanging of the jaw at the back, which marks the flexible and gaping mouth of the devouring tribes.

Again; among things essential to the might of an eagle, next to his wings (which are of course prominent in both examples), are his *claws*. It is no use his being able to tear anything with his beak, if he cannot first hold it in his claws; he has comparatively no leonine power of striking with his feet, but a magnificent power of grip with them. Accordingly, we see that the real griffin, while his feet are heavy enough to strike like a lion's, has them also extended far enough to give them the eagle's grip with the back claw; and has, moreover, some of the bird-like wrinkled skin over the whole foot, marking this binding power the more: and that he has besides verily got something to hold with his feet, other than a flower; of which more presently.

§ 15. Now, observe, the Lombardic workman did not do all this because he had thought it out, as you and I are doing together; he never thought a bit about it. He simply saw the beast; saw it as plainly as you see the writing on this page, and of course could not be wrong in anything he told us of it.

Well, what more does he tell us? Another thing, remember, essential to an eagle is that it should fly *fast*. It is no use its having wings at all if it is to be impeded in the use of them. Now it would be difficult to impede him more thoroughly than by giving him two cocked ears to catch the wind.

Look, again, at the two beasts. You see the false griffin *has* them so set, and, consequently, as he flew, there would be a continual humming of the wind on each side of his

head, and he would have an infallible ear-ache when he got home. But the real griffin has his ears flat to his head, and all the hair of them blown back, even to a point, by his fast flying, and the aperture is downwards, that he may hear anything going on upon the earth, where his prey is. In the false griffin the aperture is upwards.

§ 16. Well, what more? As he is made up of the natures of lion and eagle, we may be very certain that a real griffin is, on the whole, fond of eating, and that his throat will look as if he occasionally took rather large pieces, besides being flexible enough to let him bend and stretch his head in every direction as he flies.

Look again at the two beasts. You see the false one has got those bosses upon his neck like vertebræ, which must be infinitely in his way when he is swallowing, and which are evidently inseparable, so that he cannot *stretch* his neck any more than a horse. But the real griffin is all loose about the neck, evidently being able to make it almost as much longer as he likes; to stretch and bend it anywhere, and swallow anything, besides having some of the grand strength of the bull's dewlap in it when at rest.

§ 17. What more? Having both lion and eagle in him, it is probable that the real griffin will have an infinite look of repose as well as power of activity. One of the notablest things about a lion is his magnificent *indolence*, his look of utter disdain of trouble when there is no occasion for it; as, also, one of the notablest things about an eagle is his look of inevitable vigilance, even when quietest. Look again at the two beasts. You see the false griffin is quite sleepy and dead in the eye, thus contradicting his eagle's nature, but is putting himself to a great deal of unnecessary trouble with his paws, holding one in a most painful position merely to touch a flower, and bearing the whole weight of his body on the other, thus contradicting his lion's nature.

But the real griffin is primarily, with his eagle's nature, wide awake; evidently quite ready for whatever may happen; and with his lion's nature, laid all his length on his belly,

prone and ponderous; his two paws as simply put out before him as a drowsy puppy's on a drawing-room hearth-rug; not but that he has got something to do with them, worthy of such paws; but he takes not one whit more trouble about it than is absolutely necessary. He has merely got a poisonous winged dragon to hold, and for such a little matter as that, he may as well do it lying down and at his ease, looking out at the same time for any other piece of work in his way. He takes the dragon by the middle, one paw under the wing, another above, gathers him up into a knot, puts two or three of his claws well into his back, crashing through the scales of it and wrinkling all the flesh up from the wound, flattens him down against the ground, and so lets him do what he likes. The dragon tries to bite him, but can only bring his head round far enough to get hold of his own wing, which he bites in agony instead; flapping the griffin's dewlap with it, and wriggling his tail up against the griffin's throat; the griffin being, as to these minor proceedings, entirely indifferent, sure that the dragon's body cannot drag itself one hair's breadth off those ghastly claws, and that its head can do no harm but to itself.

§ 18. Now observe how in all this, through every separate part and action of the creature, the imagination is *always* right. It evidently *cannot* err; it meets every one of our requirements respecting the griffin as simply as if it were gathering up the bones of the real creature out of some ancient rock. It does not itself know or care, any more than the peasant labouring with his spade and axe, what is wanted to meet our theories or fancies. It knows simply what is there, and brings out the positive creature, errorless, unquestionable. So it is throughout art, and in all that the imagination does; if anything be wrong it is not the imagination's fault, but some inferior faculty's, which would have its foolish say in the matter, and meddled with the imagination, and said, the bones ought to be put together tail first, or upside down.

§ 19. This, however, we need not be amazed at, because

the very essence of the imagination is already defined[1] to be the seeing to the heart; and it is not therefore wonderful that it should never err; but it is wonderful, on the other hand, how the composing legalism does *nothing else* than err. One would have thought that, by mere chance, in this or the other element of griffin, the griffin-composer might have struck out a truth; that he might have had the luck to set the ears back, or to give some grasp to the claw. But no; from beginning to end it is evidently impossible for him to be anything but wrong; his whole soul is instinct with lies; no veracity can come within hail of him; to him all regions of right and life are for ever closed.

§ 20. And another notable point is, that while the imagination receives truth in this simple way, it is all the while receiving statutes of composition also, far more noble than those for the sake of which the truth was lost by the legalist. The ornamental lines in the classical griffin appear at first finer than in the other; but they only appear so because they are more commonplace and more palpable. The subtlety of the sweeping and rolling curves in the real griffin, the way they waver and change and fold, down the neck, and along the wing, and in and out among the serpent coils, is incomparably grander, merely as grouping of ornamental line, than anything in the other; nor is it fine as ornamental only, but as massively useful, giving weight of stone enough to answer the entire purpose of pedestal sculpture. Note, especially, the insertion of the three plumes of the dragon's broken wing in the outer angle, just under the large coil of his body; this filling of the gap being one of the necessities, not of the pedestal block merely, but a means of getting mass and breadth, which all composers desire more or less, but which they seldom so perfectly accomplish.

So that, taking the truth first, the honest imagination gains everything; it has its griffinism, and grace, and usefulness, all at once: but the false composer, caring for nothing

[1] [In *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 253). On knowledge deadening the imagination, compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 65).]

but himself and his rules, loses everything,—griffinism, grace, and all.

§ 21. I believe the reader will now sufficiently see how the terms "true" and "false" are in the most accurate sense attachable to the opposite branches of what might appear at first, in both cases, the merest wildness of inconsistent reverie. But they are even to be attached, in a deeper sense than that in which we have hitherto used them, to these two compositions. For the imagination hardly ever works in this intense way, unencumbered by the inferior faculties, unless it be under the influence of some solemn purpose or sentiment. And to all the falseness and all the verity of these two ideal creatures this farther falsehood and verity have yet to be added, that the classical griffin has, at least in this place, no other intent than that of covering a level surface with entertaining form; but the Lombardic griffin is a profound expression of the most passionate symbolism. Under its eagle's wings are two wheels,* which mark it as connected, in the mind of him who wrought it, with the living creatures of the vision of Ezekiel: "When they went, the wheels went by them," and "whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; and the wheels were lifted up over against them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels."[1] Thus signed, the winged shade becomes at once one of the acknowledged symbols of the divine power; and, in its unity of lion and eagle, the workmen of the Middle Ages always meant to set forth the unity of the human and divine natures.† In this unity it bears up the pillars of the Church, set for ever as the corner-stone. And the

* At the extremities of the wings,—not seen in the plate.[2]

† Compare the *Purgatorio,* canto xxix., etc.[3]

[1] [Ezekiel i. 19, 20.]

[2] [In his copy for revision, Ruskin marks this statement as wrong of the Veronese griffin, but refers to instances at Ferrara and Padua both with and without wheels.]

[3] [The reference is to the griffin in the mystical procession in the terrestrial paradise (commonly understood to be symbolical of Christ, human and divine): see *Purgatorio,* xxix. 108; xxx. 8; xxxi. 80, 113, 120, 122; xxxii. 26, 43, 47, 89, 96.]

faithful and true imagination beholds it, in this unity, with everlasting vigilance and calm omnipotence, restrain the seed of the serpent crushed upon the earth; leaving the head of it free, only for a time, that it may inflict in its fury profounder destruction upon itself,—in this also full of deep meaning. The divine power does not slay the evil creature. It wounds and restrains it only. Its final and *deadly* wound is inflicted by itself.

CHAPTER IX

OF FINISH[1]

§ 1. I AM afraid the reader must be, by this time, almost tired of hearing about truth. But I cannot help this; the more I have examined the various forms of art, and exercised myself in receiving their differently intended impressions, the more I have found this truthfulness a final test, and the only test of lasting power; and, although our concern in this part of our inquiry is, professedly, with the beauty which blossoms out of truth, still I find myself

[1] [In the original draft, this chapter formed a further subdivision of the general division which comprises the last three chapters—thus "Of the True Ideal: the Executive Ideal": a heading thus amplified in a note "or, what is agreeable in technical matters, or colour and composition," a reference being supplied to the end of the first part in the first volume (Vol. III. p. 130). In correspondence with this arrangement, the chapter began with the following remarks :—

> "It was noticed in the chapter on greatness of style in art [see above, ch. iii. §§ 10, 11], that one form of failing arose from the sacrifice of expression to technical excellence, another from that of technical excellence to expression. Now, strictly speaking, all merit displayed in this work is 'artistic merit'; but the peculiar qualities meant by the expression in that place form a separate branch of the ideal which we have here to examine. Hitherto, it will be observed, we have been speaking of the thing conceived, and of ideal character as shown in its conception; now we have to speak of the thing executed, and of ideal character shown in its execution, or the ideas belonging to the language itself: see page 10 of vol. i. [in this edition Vol. III. p. 91]. Everything imperfectly realised (as, for an instance, by a mere outline of a tree) necessarily makes us think not only of the thing itself, but of the sort of stroke or mark which represents it. If art were perfect, so that it could not be distinguished from the reality, of course the idea of merit in execution would have no place in our minds; the picture would either deceive and be right, or not deceive and be wrong. But, imitation being necessarily imperfect, we habitually regard these means, by which it is effected, according to their success, and take pleasure in examining and inquiring into them. To do as much as possible with small means, and other such excellence, becomes therefore an ideal aim with respect to execution."

The draft next outlines—in rough notes only—a second branch of "the executive ideal," namely, "the intrinsic beauty of the colours and lines of the picture irrespective of what they represent," and then passes on to a discussion of "Finish," as in the text.]

compelled always to gather it by the stalk, not by the petals. I cannot hold the beauty, nor be sure of it for a moment, but by feeling for that strong stem.

We have, in the preceding chapters, glanced through the various operations of the imaginative power of man; with this almost painfully monotonous result, that its greatness and honour were always simply in proportion to the quantity of truth it grasped. And now the question, left undetermined some hundred pages back (Chap. II. § 6), recurs to us in a simpler form than it could before. How far is this true imagination to be truly represented? How far should the perfect conception of Pallas be so given as to look like Pallas herself, rather than like the picture of Pallas?

§ 2. A question, this, at present of notable interest, and demanding instant attention. For it seemed to us, in reasoning about Dante's views of art,[1] that he was, or might be, right in desiring realistic completeness; and yet, in what we have just seen of the grotesque ideal, it seemed there was a certain desirableness in *in*completeness. And the schools of art in Europe are, at this moment, set in two hostile ranks,—not nobly hostile, but spitefully and scornfully; having for one of the main grounds of their dispute the apparently simple question, how far a picture may be carried forward in detail, or how soon it may be considered as finished.

I purpose, therefore, in the present chapter, to examine, as thoroughly as I can, the real signification of this word, Finish, as applied to art, and to see if in this, as in other matters, our almost tiresome test is not the only right one; whether there be not a *fallacious* finish and a *faithful* finish, and whether the dispute, which seems to be only about completion and incompletion, has not therefore, at the bottom of it, the old and deep grounds of fallacy and fidelity.

§ 3. Observe, first, there are two great and separate

[1] [See above, p. 38.]

senses in which we call a thing finished, or well-finished. One, which refers to the mere neatness and completeness of the actual work, as we speak of a well-finished knife-handle or ivory toy (as opposed to ill-cut ones); and secondly, a sense which refers to the effect produced by the thing done, as we call a picture well-finished if it is so full in its details, as to produce the effect of reality on the spectator. And, in England, we seem at present to value highly the first sort of finish which belongs to work*manship*, in our manufactures and general doings of any kind, but to despise totally the impressive finish which belongs to the *work;* and therefore we like smooth ivories better than rough ones,—but careless scrawls or daubs better than the most complete paintings. Now, I believe that we exactly reverse the fitness of judgment in this matter, and that we ought, on the contrary, to despise the finish of work*manship*, which is done for vanity's sake, and to love the finish of *work*, which is done for truth's sake,—that we ought, in a word, to finish our ivory toys more roughly, and our pictures more delicately.

Let us think over this matter.

§ 4. Perhaps one of the most remarkable points of difference between the English and Continental nations is in the degree of finish given to their ordinary work.[1] It is enough to cross from Dover to Calais to feel this difference: and to travel farther only increases the sense of it. English windows for the most part fit their sashes, and their woodwork is neatly planed and smoothed: French windows are larger, heavier, and framed with wood that looks as if it had been cut to its shape with a hatchet; they have curious and cumbrous fastenings, and can only be forced asunder or together by some ingenuity and effort, and even then not properly. So with everything else—French, Italian, and German, and, as far as I know, Continental. Foreign drawers

[1] [This contrast occurred to Ruskin on returning from the Continent in 1854: compare the passage from his diary cited in the Introduction above, p. xxxv., and see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. i. § 4.]

do not slide as well as ours; foreign knives do not cut so well; foreign wheels do not turn so well; and we commonly plume ourselves much upon this, believing that generally the English people do their work better and more thoroughly, or as they say, "turn it out of their hands in better style," than foreigners. I do not know how far this is really the case. There may be a flimsy neatness as well as a substantial roughness; it does not necessarily follow that the window which shuts easiest will last the longest, or that the harness which glitters the most is assuredly made of the toughest leather. I am afraid, that if this peculiar character of finish in our workmanship ever arose from a greater heartiness and thoroughness in our ways of doing things, it does so only now in the case of our best manufactures; and that a great deal of the work done in England, however good in appearance, is but treacherous and rotten in substance. Still, I think that there is really in the English mind, for the most part, a stronger desire to do things as well as they can be done, and less inclination to put up with inferiorities or insufficiencies, than in general characterize the temper of foreigners. There is in this conclusion no ground for national vanity; for though the desire to do things as well as they can be done at first appears like a virtue, it is certainly not so in all its forms. On the contrary, it proceeds in nine cases out of ten more from vanity than conscientiousness; and that, moreover, often a weak vanity. I suppose that as much finish is displayed in the fittings of the private carriages of our young rich men as in any other department of English manufacture; and that our St. James's Street cabs, dogcarts, and liveries are singularly perfect in their way. But the feeling with which this perfection is insisted upon (however desirable as a sign of energy of purpose) is not in itself a peculiarly amiable or noble feeling; neither is it an ignoble disposition which would induce a country gentleman to put up with certain deficiencies in the appearance of his country-made carriage. It is true that such philosophy may degenerate into negligence, and that much

thought and long discussion would be needed before we could determine satisfactorily the limiting lines between virtuous contentment and faultful carelessness; but at all events we have no right at once to pronounce ourselves the wisest people because we like to do all things in the best way. There are many little things which to do admirably is to waste both time and cost; and the real question is not so much whether we have done a given thing as well as possible, as whether we have turned a given quantity of labour to the best account.

§ 5. Now, so far from the labour's being turned to good account which is given to our English "finishing," I believe it to be usually destructive of the best powers of our workmen's minds. For it is evident, in the first place, that there is almost always a useful and a useless finish; the hammering and welding which are necessary to produce a sword blade of the best quality, are useful finishing; the polish of its surface, useless.* In nearly all work this distinction will, more or less, take place between substantial finish and apparent finish, or what may be briefly characterized as "Make" and "Polish." And so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "make," I have nothing to say against it. Even the vanity which displays itself in giving strength to our work is rather a virtue than a vice. But so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "polish," there is much to be said against it; this first, and very strongly, that the qualities aimed at in common finishing, namely, smoothness, delicacy, or fineness, *cannot* in reality *exist*, in a degree worth admiring, in anything done by human hands. Our best finishing is but coarse and blundering work after all. We

* "With his Yemen sword for aid;
Ornament it carried none,
But the notches on the blade." [1]

[1] [*The Death Feud: an Arab War Song*, anonymous translation from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1850. Ruskin perhaps came across the lines in Helps' *Companions of my Solitude*, p. 248, where they are quoted.]

may smooth, and soften, and sharpen till we are sick at heart; but take a good magnifying-glass to our miracle of skill, and the invisible edge is a jagged saw, and the silky thread a rugged cable, and the soft surface a granite desert. Let all the ingenuity and all the art of the human race be brought to bear upon the attainment of the utmost possible finish, and they could not do what is done in the foot of a fly, or the film of a bubble. God alone can finish;[1] and the more intelligent the human mind becomes, the more the infiniteness of interval is felt between human and divine work in this respect. So then it is not a little absurd to weary ourselves in struggling towards a point which we never can reach, and to exhaust our strength in vain endeavours to produce qualities which exist inimitably and inexhaustibly in the commonest things around us.

§ 6. But more than this: the fact is, that in multitudes of instances, instead of gaining greater fineness of finish by our work, we are only destroying the fine finish of nature, and substituting coarseness and imperfection. For instance, when a rock of any kind has lain for some time exposed to the weather, Nature finishes it in her own way; first, she takes wonderful pains about its forms, sculpturing it into exquisite variety of dint and dimple, and rounding or hollowing it into contours, which for fineness no human hand can follow; then she colours it; and every one of her touches of colour, instead of being a powder mixed with oil, is a minute forest of living trees, glorious in strength and beauty, and concealing wonders of structure which in all probability are mysteries even to the eyes of angels. Man comes, and digs up this finished and marvellous piece of work, which in his ignorance he calls a "rough stone." He proceeds to finish it in *his* fashion, that is, to split it in two, rend it into ragged blocks, and, finally, to chisel its surface into a large number of lumps and knobs, all equally

[1] [Compare *Modern Painters,* vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 138), where Ruskin speaks of God's "infinite finish."]

shapeless, colourless, deathful, and frightful.* And the block thus disfigured he calls "finished," and proceeds to build therewith, and thinks himself great, forsooth, and an intelligent animal. Whereas, all that he has really done is, to destroy with utter ravage a piece of divine art, which, under the laws appointed by the Deity to regulate His work in this world, it must take good twenty years to produce the like of again. This he has destroyed, and has himself given in its place a piece of work which needs no more intelligence to do than a pholas has, or a worm, or the spirit which throughout the world has authority over rending, rottenness, and decay. I do not say that stone must not be cut; it needs to be cut for certain uses; only I say that the cutting is not "finishing," but *un*finishing, it; and that so far as the mere fact of chiselling goes, the stone is ruined by the human touch. It is with it as with the stones of the Jewish altar: "If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it."[1] In like manner, a tree is a finished thing. But a plank, though ever so polished, is not. We need stones and planks, as we need food; but we no more bestow an additional admirableness upon stone in hewing it, or upon a tree in sawing it, than upon an animal in killing it.

§ 7. Well, but it will be said, there is certainly a kind of finish in stone-cutting, and in every other art, which *is* meritorious, and which consists in smoothing and refining as much as possible. Yes, assuredly there is a meritorious finish. First, as it has just been said, that which fits a thing for its uses,—as a stone to lie well in its place, or a cog of an engine-wheel to play well on another; and, secondly, a finish belonging properly to the arts; but *that* finish does not consist in smoothing or polishing, but in the *completeness of the expression of ideas.* For in painting

* See the base of the new Army and Navy Clubhouse.[2]

[1] [Exodus xx. 25.]

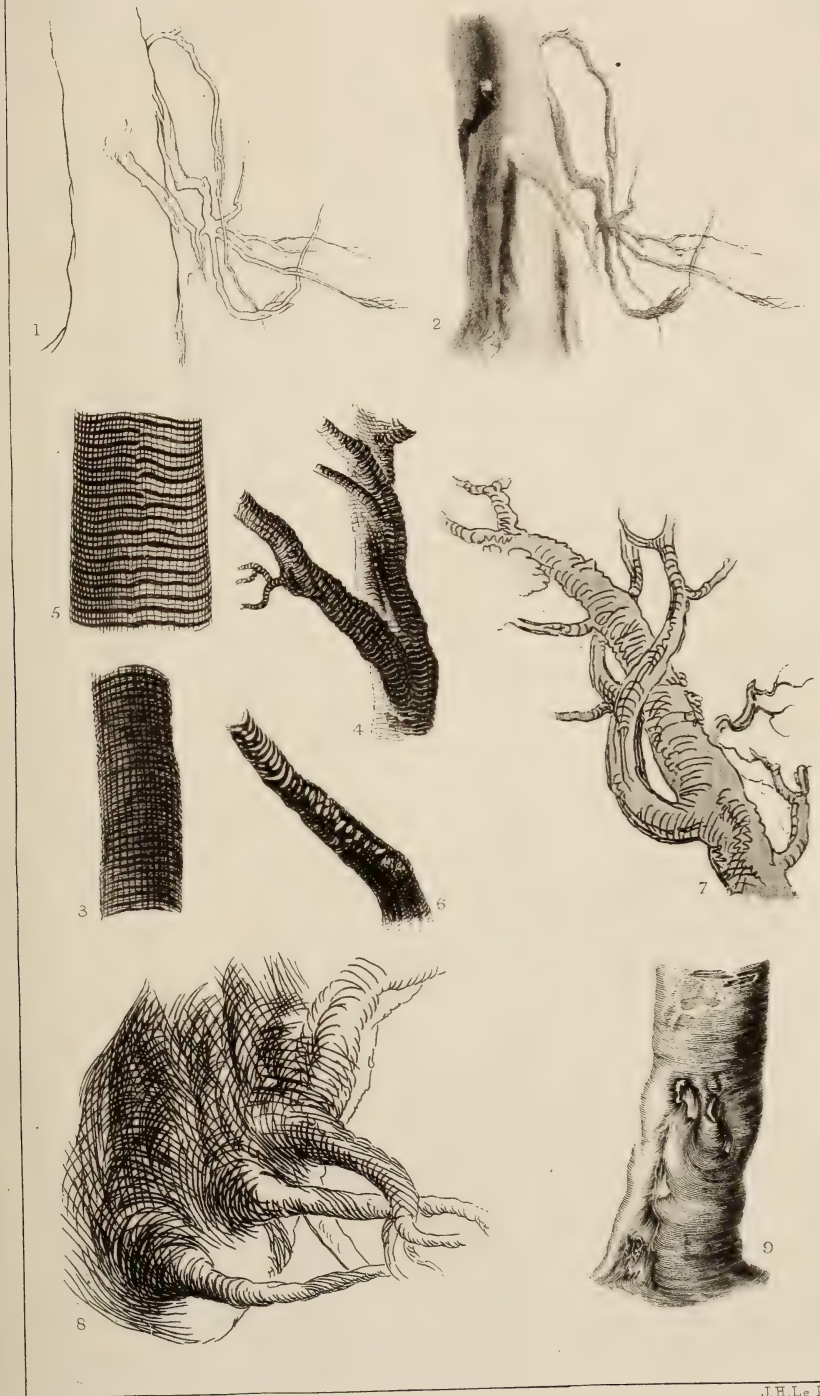
[2] [See Vol. IX. p. 348 *n.*; and for another criticism of the building, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting,* § 35 (Vol. XII. p. 58).]

there is precisely the same difference between the ends proposed in finishing that there is in manufacture. Some artists finish for the finish' sake;[1] dot their pictures all over, as in some kinds of miniature painting (when a wash of colour would have produced as good an effect); or polish their pictures all over, making the execution so delicate that the touch of the brush cannot be seen, for the sake of the smoothness merely, and of the credit they may thus get for great labour; which kind of execution, seen in great perfection in many works of the Dutch school, and in those of Carlo Dolci,[2] is that polished "language" against which I have spoken at length in various portions of the first volume; nor is it possible to speak of it with too great severity or contempt, where it has been made an ultimate end.

But other artists finish for the impression's sake, not to show their skill, nor to produce a smooth piece of work, but that they may, with each stroke, render clearer the expression of knowledge. And this sort of finish is not, properly speaking, so much *completing* the picture as *adding* to it. It is not that what is painted is more delicately done, but that infinitely *more* is painted. This finish is always noble, and, like all other noblest things, hardly ever understood or appreciated. I must here endeavour, more especially with respect to the state of quarrel between the schools of living painters, to illustrate it thoroughly.

§ 8. In sketching the outline, suppose of the trunk of a tree, as in Plate 2 (opposite), fig. 1, it matters comparatively little whether the outline be given with a bold or a delicate line, so long as it is *outline only*. The work is not more "finished" in one case than in the other; it is only prepared for being seen at a greater or less distance. The real refinement or finish of the line depends, not on its thinness, but on its truly following the contours of the tree, which it conventionally represents; conventionally, I say, because there is no such line round the tree in reality;

[1] [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 197).]
[2] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 91).]



Salvator, &c.

J.H. Le Keux.
Allen & Co Sc

2. Drawing of Tree-Stems.

and it is set down not as an *imit*ation, but a *limit*ation of the form. But if we are to add shade to it, as in fig. 2, the outline must instantly be made proportionately delicate, not for the sake of delicacy, as such, but because the outline will now, in many parts, stand not for limitation of form merely, but for a portion of the *shadow* within that form. Now, as a limitation it was true, but as a shadow it would be false, for there is no line of black shadow at the edge of the stem. It must, therefore, be made so delicate as not to detach itself from the rest of the shadow where shadow exists, and only to be seen in the light where limitation is still necessary.

Observe, then, the "finish" of fig. 2 as compared with fig. 1 consists, not in its greater delicacy, but in the addition of a truth (shadow), and the removal, in a great degree, of a conventionalism (outline). All true finish consists in one or other of these things. Now, therefore, if we are to "finish" farther, we must *know* more or *see* more about the tree. And as the plurality of persons who draw trees know nothing of them, and will not look at them, it results necessarily that the effort to finish is not only vain, but unfinishes—does mischief. In the lower part of the plate, figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6 are facsimiles of pieces of line engraving, meant to represent trunks of trees; 3 and 4 are the commonly accredited types of tree-drawing among engravers in the eighteenth century, 5 and 6 are quite modern; 3 is from a large and important plate by Boydell, from Claude's Molten Calf, dated 1781; 4 by Boydell in 1776, from Rubens's Waggoner; 5 from a bombastic engraving, published about twenty years ago by Meulemeester, of Brussels, from Raphael's Moses at the Burning Bush; and 6 from the foreground of Miller's Modern Italy, after Turner.*

* I take this example from Miller, because, on the whole, he is the best engraver of Turner whom we have.[1]

[1] [William Miller (1796–1882) engraved several of Turner's pictures, as well as many of his drawings for Scott, Campbell, Rogers, "Rivers of France," and

All these represent, as far as the engraving goes, simply *nothing*. They are not "finished" in any sense but this,—that the paper has been covered with lines.[1] 4 is the best, because, in the original work of Rubens, the lines of the boughs, and their manner of insertion in the trunk, have been so strongly marked, that no engraving could quite efface them; and, inasmuch as it represents these facts in the boughs, that piece of engraving is more finished than the other examples, while its own network texture is still false and absurd: for there is no texture of this knitted-stocking-like description on boughs; and if there were, it would not be seen in the shadow, but in the light. Miller's is spirited and looks lustrous, but has no resemblance to the original bough of Turner's, which is pale, and does not glitter. The Netherlands work is, on the whole, the worst, because in its ridiculous double lines, it adds affectation and conceit to its incapacity. But in all these cases the engravers have worked in total ignorance both of what is meant by "drawing," and of the form of a tree, covering their paper with certain lines, which they have been taught to plough in copper, as a husbandman ploughs in clay.

§ 9. In the next three examples we have instances of endeavours at finish by the hands of artists themselves, marking three stages of knowledge or insight, and three relative stages of finish. Fig. 7 is Claude's (Liber Veritatis, No. 140, facsimile by Boydell).[2] It still displays an appalling ignorance of the forms of trees, but yet is, in mode of

"England and Wales." The "Modern Italy" (exhibited 1838) was engraved by him for *The Turner Gallery*. John Boydell (1719–1804), well known as an engraver, and still better as a printseller and proprietor of "The Shakespeare Gallery"; Lord Mayor in 1790. Claude's "Worship of the Golden Calf" was engraved by Daniel Larpiniere (1745–1785), and published by Boydell; the design is analysed in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 14. Rubens' "Waggoner" was engraved by John Browne (1719–1790), and published by Boydell. Raphael's "Moses at the Burning Bush" is one of the frescoes in the Stanza d'Elidoro in the Vatican; engraved by Joseph Carl Meulemeester (*b.* 1775).]

[1] [In an earlier draft, Ruskin added:—

"Though much additional labour has been bestowed upon the work, it is no more finished than if the engraver had spent his time in dancing round the tree instead of scratching over it."]

[2] [See, for another piece of this tree, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 127 and Plate xiii. (Vol. XII. p. 127).]

J. Ruskin.

J H Le Keux
Allen & Co. Sc.

3. Strength of old Pine.

execution, better—that is, more finished—than the engravings, because not *altogether* mechanical, and showing some dim, far-away, blundering memory of a few facts in stems, such as their variations of texture and roundness, and bits of young shoots of leaves. 8 is Salvator's, facsimiled from part of his original etching of the Finding of Œdipus.[1] It displays considerable power of handling — not mechanical, but free and firm, and is just so much more finished than any of the others as it displays more intelligence about the way in which boughs gather themselves out of the stem, and about the varying character of their curves. Finally, fig. 9 is good work. It is the root of the apple-tree in Albert Dürer's Adam and Eve,[2] and fairly represents the wrinkles of the bark, the smooth portions emergent beneath, and the general anatomy of growth. All the lines used conduce to the representation of these facts; and the work is therefore highly finished. It still, however, leaves out, as not to be represented by such kind of lines, the more delicate gradations of light and shade. I shall now "finish" a little farther, in the next plate (3), the mere *insertion of the two boughs* outlined in fig. 1. I do this simply by adding assertions of more facts. First, I say that the whole trunk is dark, as compared with the distant sky. Secondly, I say that it is rounded by gradations of shadow, in the various forms shown. And, lastly, I say that (this being a bit of old pine stripped by storm of its bark) the wood is fissured in certain directions, showing its grain, or *muscle*, seen in complicated contortions at the insertion of the arm and elsewhere.

§ 10. Now this piece of work, though yet far from complete (we will better it presently), is yet more finished than any of the others, not because it is more delicate or more skilful, but simply because it tells more truth, and admits

[1] [Other pieces of this etching are reproduced in Plate 57 and Fig. 57 in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 7.]

[2] [For Dürer's "Adam and Eve," compare *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 149); *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 172 and *n.*); and *Ariadne Florentina*, §§ 128, 129, 169.]

fewer fallacies. That which conveys most information, with least inaccuracy, is always the highest finish; and the question whether we prefer art so finished, to art unfinished, is not one of taste at all. It is simply a question whether we like to know much or little; to see accurately or see falsely; and those whose *taste* in art (if they choose so to call it) leads them to like blindness better than sight, and fallacy better than fact, would do well to set themselves to some other pursuit than that of art.

§ 11. In the above place we have examined chiefly the grain and surface of the boughs; we have not yet noticed the finish of their curvature. If the reader will look back to the No. 7 (Plate 2), which, in this respect, is the worst of all the set, he will immediately observe the exemplification it gives of Claude's principal theory about trees; namely, that the boughs always parted from each other, two at a time, in the manner of the prongs of an ill-made table-fork. It may, perhaps, not be at once believed that this is indeed Claude's theory respecting tree-structure, without some farther examples of his practice. I have, therefore, assembled on the opposite page, Plate 4, some of the most characteristic passages of ramification in the Liber Veritatis; the plates themselves are sufficiently cheap (as they should be) and accessible to nearly every one, so that the accuracy of the facsimiles may be easily tested. I have given in Appendix I.[1] the numbers of the plates from which the examples are taken, and it will be found that they have been rather improved than libelled, only omitting, of course, the surrounding leafage, in order to show accurately the branch outlines, with which alone we are at present concerned. And it would be difficult to bring together a series more totally futile and foolish, more singularly wrong (as the false griffin was), every way at once: they are stiff, and yet have no strength; curved, and yet have no flexibility; monotonous, and yet disorderly; unnatural, and yet uninventive. They are, in fact, of that

[1] [See below, p. 422.]

Claude.

J.H. Le Keux.
Allen & Co. Sc.

4. Ramification, according to Claude.

commonest kind of tree bough which a child or beginner first draws experimentally; nay, I am well assured, that if this set of branches had been drawn by a schoolboy, "out of his own head," his master would hardly have cared to show them as signs of any promise in him.

§ 12. "Well, but do not the trunks of trees fork, and fork mostly into two arms at a time?"

Yes; but under as stern anatomical[1] law as the limbs of an animal: and those hooked junctions in Plate 4 are just as accurately representative of the branching of wood as this (fig. 2) is of a neck and shoulders. We should object to such a representation of shoulders, because we have some interest in, and knowledge of, human form; we do not object to Claude's trees, because we have no interest in, nor knowledge of, trees. And if it be still alleged that such work is nevertheless enough to give any one an "idea" of a tree, I answer that it never gave, nor ever will give, an idea of a tree to any one who loves trees; and that, moreover, no idea, whatever its pleasantness, is of the smallest value, which is not founded on simple facts. What pleasantness may be in *wrong* ideas we do not here inquire; the only question for us has always been, and must always be, What are the facts?

Fig. 2

§ 13. And assuredly those boughs of Claude's are not facts; and every one of their contours is, in the worst sense, unfinished, without even the expectation or faint hope of possible refinement ever coming into them. I do not mean to enter here into the discussion of the characters of ramification; that must be in our separate inquiry into tree-structure generally;[2] but I will merely give one piece of Turner's tree-drawing as an example of what finished work really is, even in outline. In Plate 5, fig. 1 is the

[1] [For Ruskin's explanation of this term, see the letter in Appendix iv. below, p. 432.]

[2] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. v. part vi.]

contour (stripped, like Claude's, of its foliage) of one of the distant tree-stems in the drawing of Bolton Abbey.[1] In order to show its perfectness better by contrast with bad work (as we have had, I imagine, enough of Claude), I will take a bit of Constable; fig. 2 is the principal tree out of the engraving of the Lock on the Stour (Leslie's *Life of Constable*).[2] It differs from the Claude outlines merely in being the kind of work which is produced by an uninventive person dashing about idly, with a brush, instead of drawing determinately wrong, with a pen: on the one hand worse than Claude's, in being lazier; on the other a little better, in being more free, but, as representative of tree form, of course still wholly barbarous. It is worth while to turn back to the description of the uninventive painter at work on a tree (Vol. II. chapter on Imaginative Association, § 11[3]), for this trunk of Constable's is curiously illustrative of it. One can almost see him, first bending it to the right; then, having gone long enough to the right, turning to the left; then, having gone long enough to the left, away to the right again; then dividing it; and "because there is another tree in the picture with two long branches (in this case there really is), he knows that this ought to have three or four, which must undulate or go backwards and forwards," etc., etc.

§ 14. Then study the bit of Turner work; note first its quietness, unattractiveness, apparent carelessness whether you look at it or not; next note the subtle curvatures within the narrowest limits, and, when it branches, the unexpected, out of the way things it does, just what nobody could have thought of its doing; shooting out like a letter Y, with a nearly straight branch, and then correcting its stiffness with a zig-zag behind, so that the boughs, ugly

[1] [This drawing was in Ruskin's collection; see Vol. XIII. The right-hand portion of it is etched in Plate 12 in this volume, and mezzotinted in Plate 12A in the next volume. The trees have already been mentioned in *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 586).]

[2] [*Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, 1843, p. 43 (the plates are in that, the first, edition only).]

[3] [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 238.]

Turner, Constable

J. Cousen
Allen & Co Sc

5. Good and Bad Tree-Drawing.

individually, are beautiful in unison. (In what I have hereafter to say about trees, I shall need to dwell much on this character of *unexpectedness.*[1] A bough is never drawn rightly if it is not wayward, so that although, as just now said, quiet at first, not caring to be looked at, the moment it *is* looked at, it seems bent on astonishing you, and doing the last things you expect it to do.) But our present purpose is only to note the *finish* of the Turner *curves*, which, though they seem straight and stiff at first, are, when you look long, seen to be all tremulous, perpetually waving along every edge into endless melody of change. This is finish in line, in exactly the same sense that a fine melody is finished in the association of its notes.

§ 15. And now, farther, let us take a little bit of the Turnerian tree in light and shade. I said above I would better the drawing of that pine trunk, which, though it has incipient shade, and muscular action, has no texture, nor local colour. Now I take about an inch and a half of Turner's ash trunks (one of the nearer ones in this same drawing of Bolton Abbey) (fig. 3, Plate 5), and *this* I cannot better; this is perfectly finished; it is not possible to add more truth to it on that scale. Texture of bark, anatomy of muscle beneath, reflected lights in recessed hollows, stains of dark moss, and flickering shadows from the foliage above, all are there, as clearly as the human hand can mark them. I place a bit of trunk by Constable (fig. 5),* from another plate in Leslie's Life of him (a dell in Helmingham Park, Suffolk), for the sake of the same

* Fig. 5 is not, however, so *lustrous* as Constable's; I cannot help this, having given the original plate to my good friend Mr. Cousen, with strict charge to facsimile it faithfully; but the figure is all the fairer, as a representation of Constable's art, for those mezzotints in Leslie's Life of him have many qualities of drawing which are quite wanting in Constable's blots of colour. The comparison shall be made elaborately, between picture and picture, in the section on Vegetation.[2]

[1] [See especially in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. viii. § 11.]

[2] [The plate, "Helmingham Park," faces p. 6 in Leslie's *Life of Constable.* The comparison here promised was not made; but see the further remarks on Constable's drawing of trees in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. v. § 19.]

out of that, the nearer leaves coming in every subtle gradation of tender light and flickering form, quite beyond all delicacy of pencilling to follow; and yet you will rise up from that bank (certainly not making it appear coarser by drawing a little back from it), and profess to represent it by a few blots of "forcible" foreground colour. "Well, but I cannot draw every leaf that I see on the bank." No, for as we saw, at the beginning of this chapter, that no human work could be finished so as to express the *delicacy* of nature, so neither can it be finished so as to express the *redundance* of nature. Accept that necessity; but do not deny it; do not call your work finished, when you have, in engraving, substituted a confusion of coarse black scratches, or in water-colour a few edgy blots, for ineffable organic beauty. Follow that beauty as far as you can, remembering that just as far as you see, know, and represent it, just so far your work is finished; as far as you fall short of it, your work is *un*finished, and as far as you substitute any other thing for it, your work is spoiled.

§ 17. How far Turner followed it, is not easily shown; for his finish is so delicate as to be nearly uncopiable. I have just said it was not possible to finish that ash trunk of his, farther, on such a scale.* By using a magnifying-glass and giving the same help to the spectator, it might perhaps be possible to add and exhibit a few more details; but even as it is, I cannot by line engraving express all that there is in that piece of tree-trunk, on the same scale. I *have* therefore magnified the upper part of it in fig. 4 (Plate 5), so that the reader may better see the beautiful lines of curvature into which even its slightest shades and spots are cast. Every quarter of an inch of Turner's drawings will bear magnifying in the same way; much of the finer work in them can hardly be traced, except by the

* It is of the exact size of the original, the whole drawing being about 15½ inches by 11 inches.[1]

[1] [Reduced by about one-fourth in this edition.]

keenest sight, until it is magnified. In his painting of Ivy Bridge,* the veins are drawn on the wings of a butterfly, not above three lines in diameter; and in one of his smaller drawings of Scarborough,[1] in my own possession, the mussel-shells on the beach are rounded, and some shown as shut, some as open, though none are as large as one of the letters of this type; and yet this is the man who was thought to belong to the "dashing" school, literally because most people had not patience or delicacy of sight enough to trace his endless detail.

§ 18. "Suppose it was so," perhaps the reader replies; "still I do not like detail so delicate that it can hardly be seen." Then you like nothing in Nature (for you will find she always carries her detail too far to be traced). This point, however, we shall examine hereafter;[2] it is not the question now whether we *like* finish or not; our only inquiry here is, what finish *means;* and I trust the reader is beginning to be satisfied that it does indeed mean nothing but consummate and accumulated truth, and that our old monotonous test must still serve us here as elsewhere. And it will become us to consider seriously why (if indeed it be so) we dislike this kind of finish—dislike an accumulation of truth. For assuredly all authority is against us, and—*no truly great name can be named in the arts—but it is that of one who finished to his utmost.* Take Leonardo, Michael Angelo, and Raphael for a triad, to begin with. *They* all completed their detail with such subtlety of touch and gradation, that, in a careful drawing by any of the three, you cannot see where the pencil ceased to touch the paper;[3]

* An oil painting (about 3 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in.), and very broad in its masses. In the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq.[4]

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[1] [For the "Scarboroughs" in Ruskin's collection, see Vol. XIII.; and compare Vol. XII. p. 382.]

[2] [See, for instance, *Modern Painters,* vol. iv. ch. ii. §§ 7, 23.]

[3] [See the appendix to *Two Paths* on "Subtlety of Hand," and Ruskin's letter to the *Literary Gazette* (November 13, 1858) in Vol. XIII.]

[4] [Now in the collection of Mr. Pandeli Ralli, shown at the Guildhall in 1899 (No. 21). The detail of the butterfly is noticed more fully in *Modern Painters,* vol. i. (see Vol. III. p. 244 and *n.*).]

the stroke of it is so tender, that, when you look close to the drawing you can see nothing; you only see the effect of it a little way back! Thus tender in execution, and so complete in detail, that Leonardo must needs draw *every several vein in the little agates* and pebbles of the gravel under the feet of the St. Anne in the Louvre.[1] Take a quartett after a triad — Titian, Tintoret, Bellini, and Veronese. Examine the vine-leaves of the Bacchus and Ariadne (Titian's), in the National Gallery; examine the borage blossoms, painted petal by petal, though lying loose on the table, in Titian's Supper at Emmaus, in the Louvre, or the snail-shells on the ground in his Entombment;* examine the separately designed patterns on every drapery of Veronese, in his Marriage in Cana; go to Venice and see how Tintoret paints the strips of black bark on the birch trunk that sustains the platform in his Adoration of the Magi;[2] how Bellini fills the rents of his ruined walls with the most exquisite clusters of the Erba della Madonna.† You will find them all in a tale. Take a quintett after the quartett—Francia, Angelico, Dürer, Memling, Perugino,—and still the witness is one, still the same striving in all to such utmost perfection as their knowledge and hand could reach.

Who shall gainsay these men? Above all, who shall gainsay them when they and Nature say precisely the same thing? for where does Nature pause in *her* finishing—that finishing which consists not in the smoothing of surface, but the filling of space, and the multiplication of life and thought?

* These snail-shells are very notable, occurring as they do in, perhaps, the very grandest and broadest of all Titian's compositions.

† Linaria Cymbalaria, the ivy-leaved toadflax of English gardens.[3]

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[1] [For this detail, and others that follow, see the "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. pp. 460, 473. For the detail in Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne," see *Academy Notes*, 1855, No. 240, and *Elements of Drawing*, § 77; for Tintoret's "Adoration of the Magi," Vol. XI. p. 406.]

[2] [See above, ch. vii. § 2, p. 112.]

[3] [For this plant, see Vol. XI. p. 336, and *Queen of the Air*, § 87.

Who shall gainsay them? I, for one, dare not; but accept their teaching, with Nature's, in all humbleness.

"But is there, then, no good in any work which does not pretend to perfectness? Is there no saving clause from this terrible requirement of completion? And if there be none, what is the meaning of all you have said elsewhere about rudeness as the glory of Gothic work, and, even a few pages back,[1] about the danger of finishing, for our modern workmen?"

Indeed there are many saving clauses, and there is much good in imperfect work. But we had better cast the consideration of these drawbacks and exceptions into another chapter, and close this one, without obscuring, in any wise, our broad conclusion that "finishing" means in art simply "telling more truth"; and that whatever we have in any sort begun wisely, it is good to finish thoroughly.[2]

[1] [See p. 152; and for the rudeness of Gothic, *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. pp. 184–204).]

[2] [In his copy for revision, Ruskin here indicated that he meant to transfer § 5 of the next chapter to the end of ch. ix.]

CHAPTER X

OF THE USE OF PICTURES[1]

§ 1. I AM afraid this will be a difficult chapter; one of drawbacks, qualifications, and exceptions. But the more I see of useful truths, the more I find that, like human beings, they are eminently biped; and, although, as far as apprehended by human intelligence, they are usually seen in a crane-like posture, standing on one leg, whenever they are to be stated so as to maintain themselves against all attack it is quite necessary they should stand on two, and have their complete balance on opposite fulcra.[2]

§ 2. I doubt not that one objection with which, as well as with another, we may begin, has struck the reader very forcibly, after comparing the illustrations above given from Turner, Constable, and Claude. He will wonder how it was that Turner, finishing in this exquisite way, and giving truths by the thousand, where other painters gave only one or two, yet, of all painters, seemed to obtain least acknowledgeable resemblance to nature, so that the world cried out upon him for a madman, at the moment when he was giving exactly the highest and most consummate truth that had ever been seen in landscape.

And he will wonder why still there seems reason for this outcry. Still, after what analysis and proof of his being right have as yet been given, the reader may perhaps be saying to himself: "All this reasoning is of no use to me. Turner does *not* give me the idea of nature; I do not feel before one of his pictures as I should in a real scene.

[1] [Here Ruskin wrote at the head, "I can't better this chapter"; he did, however, mark some intended rearrangements and add a few explanatory notes.]

[2] [Compare the passage from Ruskin's diary quoted above, Introduction, pp. liii.–liv.]

Constable takes me out into the shower,[1] and Claude into the sun; and De Wint makes me feel as if I were walking in the fields; but Turner keeps me in the house, and I know always that I am looking at a picture."

I might answer to this: Well, what else *should* he do? If you want to feel as if you were in a shower, cannot you go and get wet without help from Constable? If you want to feel as if you were walking in the fields, cannot you go and walk in them without help from De Wint? But if you want to sit in your room and look at a beautiful picture, why should you blame the artist for giving you one? This *was* the answer actually made to me by various journalists, when first I showed that Turner was truer than other painters: "Nay," said they, "we do not want truth, we want something else than truth; we would not have nature, but something better than nature."[2]

§ 3. I do not mean to accept that answer, although it seems at this moment to make for me: I have never accepted it. As I raise my eyes from the paper, to think over the curious mingling in it, of direct error, and far-away truth, I see upon the room-walls,[3] first, Turner's drawing of the chain of the Alps from the Superga above Turin; then a study of a block of gneiss at Chamouni, with the purple Aiguilles Rouges behind it; another of the towers of the Swiss Fribourg, with a cluster of pine forest behind them; then another Turner, Isola Bella, with the

[1] [Compare Fuseli's saying, Vol. III. p. 191. For De Wint, see Vol. I. p. 426, Vol. III. p. 199.]

[2] [A paraphrase of the criticisms in the *Athenæum* and *Blackwood's Magazine* upon the first volume of *Modern Painters:* see Vol. III. p. 52.]

[3] [The walls, that is, of his study, which was on the first floor of the house at Denmark Hill, at the back looking on to the garden. Turner's drawing of the view from the Superga is described (No. 17) in Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner;* for another reference to it, see *Elements of Drawing,* § 220. A copy of it made for Ruskin by Mr. W. Hackstoun is in the Museum at Sheffield. The other Turner, "Isola Bella," is described (No. 16) in the same *Notes.* The "study" at Chamouni and "the towers of Fribourg" are drawings by Ruskin—the latter is engraved as Plate 24 in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters;* for the former, see Nos. 57, 59 in the list on p. xxii. *n.*, above. The "bit of illumination" was a page which he had cut out and framed from one of his manuscripts (see Vol. XII. p. lxx.).]

blue opening to the St. Gothard in the distance; and then a fair bit of thirteenth-century illumination, depicting, at the top of the page, the Salutation; and beneath, the painter who painted it, sitting in his little convent cell, with a legend above him to this effect:—

"ego johēs scripsi hunc librum."
I, John, wrote this book.

None of these things are bad pieces of art; and yet, —if it were offered me to have, instead of them, so many windows, out of which I should see, first, the real chain of the Alps from the Superga; then the real block of gneiss, and Aiguilles Rouges; then the real towers of Fribourg, and pine forest; the real Isola Bella; and, finally, the true Mary and Elizabeth; and beneath them, the actual old monk at work in his cell,—I would very unhesitatingly change my five pictures for the five windows; and so, I apprehend, would most people, not, it seems to me, unwisely.

"Well, then," the reader goes on to question me, "the more closely the picture resembles such a window, the better it must be?"

Yes.

"Then, if Turner does not give me the impression of such a window, that is, of Nature, there must be something wrong in Turner?"

Yes.

"And if Constable and De Wint give me the impression of such a window, there must be something right in Constable and De Wint?"

Yes.

"And something more right than in Turner?"

No.

"Will you explain yourself?"

I *have* explained myself, long ago, and that fully; perhaps too fully for the simple sum of the explanation to be remembered. If the reader will glance back to, and in the present state of our inquiry, reconsider in the first volume, Part I. Sec. I. Chap. V., and Part II. Sec. I. Chap. VII.,

he will find our present difficulties anticipated.[1] There are some truths, easily obtained, which give a deceptive resemblance to Nature; others only to be obtained with difficulty, which cause no deception, but give inner and deeper resemblance. These two classes of truths cannot be obtained together; choice must be made between them. The bad painter gives the cheap deceptive resemblance. The good painter gives the precious non-deceptive resemblance. Constable perceives in a landscape that the grass is wet, the meadows flat, and the boughs shady; that is to say, about as much as, I suppose, might in general be apprehended, between them, by an intelligent fawn, and a skylark. Turner perceives at a glance the whole sum of visible truth open to human intelligence. So Berghem perceives nothing in a figure, beyond the flashes of light on the folds of its dress; but Michael Angelo perceives every flash of thought that is passing through its spirit: and Constable and Berghem may imitate windows; Turner and Michael Angelo can by no means imitate windows. But Turner and Michael Angelo are nevertheless the best.

§ 4. "Well but," the reader persists, "you admitted just now that because Turner did not get his work to look like a window there was something wrong in him."

I did so; if he were quite right he would have *all* truth, low as well as high; that is, he would be Nature and not Turner, but that is impossible to man. There is much that is wrong in him; much that is infinitely wrong in all human effort. But, nevertheless, in some an infinity of Betterness above other human effort.

"Well, but you said you would change your Turners for windows; why not, therefore, for Constables?"

Nay, I did not say that I would change them for windows *merely*, but for windows which commanded the chain of the Alps and Isola Bella. That is to say, for all the truth that there is in Turner, and all the truth besides

[1] [The references in this edition are to Vol. III. pp. 108, 163–168.]

which is not in him; but I would not change them for Constables, to have a small piece of truth which is not in Turner, and none of the mighty truth which there is.

§ 5. Thus far, then, though the subject is one requiring somewhat lengthy explanation, it involves no real difficulty. There is not the slightest inconsistency in the mode in which, throughout this work, I have desired the relative merits of painters to be judged. I have always said, he who is closest to Nature is best. All rules are useless, all genius is useless, all labour is useless, if you do not give facts; the more facts you give, the greater you are; and there is no fact so unimportant as to be prudently despised, if it be possible to represent it. Nor, but that I have long known the truth of Herbert's lines,

> "Some men are
> Full of themselves, and answer their own notion,"[1]

would it have been without intense surprise that I heard querulous readers asking, "how it was possible" that I could praise Pre-Raphaelitism and Turner also.[2] For, from the beginning of this book to this page of it, I have never praised Turner highly for any other cause than that he *gave facts* more *delicately*, more Pre-Raphaelitically, than other men. Careless readers, who dashed at the descriptions and missed the arguments, took up their own conceptions of the cause of my liking Turner, and said to themselves: "Turner cannot draw, Turner is generalizing, vague, visionary; and the Pre-Raphaelites are hard and distinct. How can any one like both?"* But *I* never said that Turner could not

* People of any sense, however, confined themselves to wonder. I think it was only in the *Art Journal* of September 1st, 1854, that any writer had the meanness to charge me with insincerity. "The pictures of Turner and the works of the Pre-Raphaelites are the very antipodes of each other; it is, therefore, impossible that one and the same individual can with any *show of sincerity* [Note, by the way, the Art Union has no idea that *real*

[1] [*The Church Porch*, liv.]
[2] [On this subject, see Introduction to Vol. XII. p. li.]

draw. *I* never said that he was vague or visionary. What *I* said was, that nobody had ever drawn so well: that nobody was so certain, so *un*-visionary; that nobody had ever given so many hard and downright facts. Glance back to the first volume, and note the expression now. "He is the only painter who ever drew a mountain or a stone;* the only painter who can draw the stem of a tree; the only painter who has ever drawn the sky, previous artists having only drawn it typically or partially, but he absolutely and universally." Note how he is praised in his rock drawing for "not selecting a pretty or interesting morsel here or there, but giving the whole truth, with all the relations of its parts."† Observe how the *great virtue* of the landscape of Cima da Conegliano and the early sacred painters is said to be giving "entire, exquisite, humble realization—a strawberry plant in the foreground with a blossom, *and a berry just set, and one half ripe, and one ripe,* all patiently and innocently painted from the *real thing, and therefore most*

sincerity is a thing existent or possible at all. All that it expects or hopes of human nature is, that it should have *show* of sincerity.] stand forth as the thick and thin [I perceive the writer intends to teach me English, as well as honesty.] eulogist of both. With a certain knowledge of art, such as may be possessed by the author of English Painters, [Note, farther, that the eminent critic does not so much as know the title of the book he is criticising.] it is not difficult to praise any bad or mediocre picture that may be qualified with extravagance or mysticism. This author owes the public a heavy debt of explanation, which a lifetime spent in ingenious reconciliations would not suffice to discharge. A fervent admiration of certain pictures by Turner, and, at the same time, of some of the severest productions of Pre-Raphaelites, presents an insuperable problem to persons whose taste in art is regulated by definite principles."[1]

* Part II. sec. i. chap. vii. § 46. [Vol. III. p. 252.]

† Part II. sec. iv. chap. iv. § 23, and Part II. sec. i. chap. vii. § 9. [Vol. III. pp. 488, 175.] The whole of the Preface to the Second Edition is written to maintain this one point of specific detail against the advocates of generalization.

[1] [This passage comes from an article in the *Art Journal* for September 1854, pp. 253–256, entitled "The Progress of Painting, The Author of English (*sic*) Painters, and Pre-Raffaelism" (*sic*). The writer notices Ruskin's Letters to the *Times* on The Pre-Raphaelites (Vol. XII. pp. 319–335), and finally concludes that those painters and Ruskin alike would speedily be forgotten.]

divine." Then re-read the following paragraph (§ 10), carefully, and note its conclusion, that the thoroughly great men are those who have done everything thoroughly, and who have never despised anything, however small, of God's making; with the instance given of Wordsworth's daisy casting its shadow on a stone; and the following sentence, "Our painters must come to this before they have done their duty." And yet, when our painters *did* come to this, did do their duty, and did paint the daisy with its shadow (this passage having been written years before Pre-Raphaelitism was thought of), people wondered how I could possibly like what was neither more or less than the precise fulfilment of my own most earnest exhortations and highest hopes.

§ 6. Thus far, then, all I have been saying is absolutely consistent, and tending to one simple end. Turner is praised for his truth and finish; that truth of which I am beginning to give examples. Pre-Raphaelitism is praised for its truth and finish; and the whole duty inculcated upon the artist is that of being in all respects as like Nature as possible.

And yet this is not all I have to do. There is more than this to be inculcated upon the student, more than this to be admitted or established, before the foundations of just judgment can be laid.

For, observe, although I believe any sensible person would exchange his pictures, however good, for windows, he would not feel, and ought not to feel, that the arrangement was *entirely* gainful to him. He would feel it was an exchange of a less good of one kind, for a greater of another kind, but that it was definitely *exchange*, not pure gain, not merely getting more truth instead of less. The picture would be a serious loss; something gone which the actual landscape could never restore, though it might give something better in its place, as age may give to the heart something better than its youthful delusion, but cannot give again the sweetness of that delusion.

§ 7. What is this in the picture which is precious to us, and yet is not natural? Hitherto our arguments have tended, on the whole, somewhat to the depreciation of art; and the reader may every now and then, so far as he has been convinced by them, have been inclined to say, "Why not give up this whole science of Mockery at once, since its only virtue is in representing facts, and it cannot, at best, represent them completely, besides being liable to all manner of shortcomings and dishonesties,—why not keep to the facts, to real fields, and hills and men, and let this dangerous painting alone?"

No, it would not be well to do this. Painting has its peculiar virtues, not only consistent with, but even resulting from, its shortcomings and weaknesses. Let us see what these virtues are.

§ 8. I must ask permission, as I have sometimes done before, to begin apparently a long way from the point.[1]

Not long ago, as I was leaving one of the towns of Switzerland, early in the morning, I saw in the clouds behind the houses an Alp which I did not know, a grander Alp than any I knew, nobler than the Schreckhorn or the Mönch; terminated, as it seemed, on one side by a precipice of almost unimaginable height; on the other, sloping away for leagues in one field of lustrous ice, clear and fair and blue, flashing here and there into silver under the morning sun. For a moment I received a sensation of as much sublimity as any natural object could possibly excite; the next moment, I saw that my unknown Alp was the glass roof of one of the work-shops of the town rising above its nearer houses and rendered aerial and indistinct by some pure blue wood smoke which rose from intervening chimneys.

It is evident, that so far as the mere delight of the eye was concerned, the glass roof was here equal, or at least equal for a moment, to the Alp. Whether the power of the object over the heart was to be small or great, depended altogether upon what it was understood for, upon

[1] [As, for instance, at the beginning of this volume, p. 17.]

its being taken possession of and apprehended in its full nature, either as a granite mountain or a group of panes of glass; and thus, always, the real majesty of the appearance of the thing to us, depends upon the degree in which we ourselves possess the power of understanding it,—that penetrating, possession-taking power of the imagination, which has been long ago defined * as the very life of the man, considered as a *seeing* creature. For though the casement had indeed been an Alp, there are many persons on whose minds it would have produced no more effect than the glass roof. It would have been to them a glittering object of a certain apparent length and breadth, and whether of glass or ice, whether twenty feet in length, or twenty leagues, would have made no difference to them; or, rather, would not have been in any wise conceived or considered by them. Examine the nature of your own emotion (if you feel it) at the sight of the Alp, and you find all the brightness of that emotion hanging, like dew on gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge. First, you have a vague idea of its size, coupled with wonder at the work of the great Builder of its walls and foundations, then an apprehension of its eternity, a pathetic sense of its perpetualness, and your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides; then, and in this very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations in seeing what they saw. They did not see the clouds that are floating over your head: nor the cottage wall on the other side of the field; nor the road by which you are travelling. But they saw *that*. The wall of granite in the heavens was the same to them as to you. They have ceased to look upon it; you will soon cease to look also, and the granite wall will be for others. Then, mingled with these more solemn imaginations, come the understandings of the gifts and glories of the Alps, the fancying forth of all the fountains that well from its rocky walls,

* Vol. ii. Chapter on Penetrative Imagination. [Vol. IV. p. 251.]

and strong rivers that are born out of its ice, and of all the pleasant valleys that wind between its cliffs, and all the châlets that gleam among its clouds, and happy farmsteads couched upon its pastures; while together with the thoughts of these, rise strange sympathies with all the unknown of human life, and happiness, and death, signified by that narrow white flame of the everlasting snow, seen so far in the morning sky.

These images, and far more than these, lie at the root of the emotion which you feel at the sight of the Alp. You may not trace them in your heart, for there is a great deal more in your heart, of evil and good, than you ever can trace; but they stir you and quicken you for all that. Assuredly, so far as you feel more at beholding the snowy mountain than any other object of the same sweet silvery grey, these are the kind of images which cause you to do so; and, observe, these are nothing more than a greater apprehension of the *facts* of the thing. We call the power "Imagination," because it imagines or conceives; but it is only noble imagination if it imagines or conceives *the truth.* And, according to the degree of knowledge possessed, and of sensibility to the pathetic or impressive character of the things known, will be the degree of this imaginative delight.

§ 9. But the main point to be noted at present is, that if the imagination can be excited to this its peculiar work, it matters comparatively little what it is excited by. If the smoke had not cleared partially away, the glass roof might have pleased me as well as an Alp, until I had quite lost sight of it; and if, in a picture, the imagination can be once caught, and, without absolute affront from some glaring fallacy, set to work in its own field, the imperfection of the historical details themselves is, to the spectator's enjoyment, of small consequence.

Hence it is, that poets, and men of strong feeling in general, are apt to be among the very worst judges of painting. The slightest hint is enough for them. Tell them

that a white stroke means a ship, and a black stain, a thunderstorm, and they will be perfectly satisfied with both, and immediately proceed to remember all that they ever felt about ships and thunderstorms, attributing the whole current and fulness of their own feelings to the painter's work; while probably, if the picture be really good, and full of stern fact, the poet, or man of feeling, will find some of its fact *in his way*, out of the particular course of his own thoughts,—be offended at it, take to criticizing and wondering at it, detect, at last, some imperfection in it, such as must be inherent in all human work,—and so finally quarrel with, and reject the whole thing. Thus, Wordsworth writes many sonnets to Sir George Beaumont and Haydon; none to Sir Joshua or to Turner.

§ 10. Hence, also, the error into which many superficial artists fall, in speaking of "addressing the imagination" as the only end of art. It is quite true that the imagination must be addressed; but it may be very sufficiently addressed by the stain left by an ink-bottle thrown at the wall. The thrower has little credit, though an imaginative observer may find, perhaps, more to amuse him in the erratic nigrescence than in many a laboured picture. And thus, in a slovenly or ill-finished picture, it is no credit to the artist that he has "addressed the imagination;" nor is the success of such an appeal any criterion whatever of the merit of the work. The duty of an artist is not only to address and awaken, but to *guide* the imagination; and there is no safe guidance but that of simple concurrence with fact. It is no matter that the picture takes the fancy of A. or B., that C. writes sonnets to it, and D. feels it to be divine. This is still the only question for the artist, or for us:—"Is it a fact? Are things really so?" Is the picture an Alp among pictures, full, firm, eternal; or only a glass house, frail, hollow, contemptible, demolishable; calling, at all honest hands, for detection and demolition?

§ 11. Hence it is also that so much grievous difficulty stands in the way of obtaining *real opinion* about pictures

at all. Tell any man, of the slightest imaginative power, that such and such a picture is good, and means this or that: tell him, for instance, that a Claude is good, and that it means trees, and grass, and water; and forthwith, whatever faith, virtue, humility, and imagination there are in the man, rise up to help Claude, and to declare that indeed it is all "excellent good, i'faith;"[1] and whatever in the course of his life he has felt of pleasure in trees and grass, he will begin to reflect upon and enjoy anew, supposing all the while it is the picture he is enjoying. Hence, when once a painter's reputation is accredited, it must be a stubborn kind of person indeed whom he will not please, or seem to please; for all the vain and weak people pretend to be pleased with him, for their own credit's sake, and all the humble and imaginative people seriously and honestly fancy they *are* pleased with him, deriving indeed, very certainly, delight from his work, but a delight which, if they were kept in the same temper, they would equally derive (and, indeed, constantly do derive) from the grossest daub that can be manufactured in imitation by the pawnbroker. Is, therefore, the pawnbroker's imitation as good as the original? Not so. There is the certain test of goodness and badness, which I am always striving to get people to use. As long as they are satisfied if they find their feelings pleasantly stirred and their fancy gaily occupied, so long there is for them no good, no bad. Anything may please, or anything displease, them; and their entire manner of thought and talking about art is mockery, and all their judgments are laborious injustices. But let them, in the teeth of their pleasure or displeasure, simply put the calm question,—Is it so? Is that the way a stone is shaped, the way a cloud is wreathed, the way a leaf is veined? and they are safe. They will do no more injustice to themselves nor to other men; they will learn to whose guidance they may trust their imagination, and from whom they must for ever withhold its reins.

[1] [*Twelfth Night*, ii. 3.]

§ 12. "Well, but why have you dragged in this poor spectator's imagination at all, if you have nothing more to say for it than this; if you are merely going to abuse it, and go back to your tiresome facts?"

Nay; I am not going to abuse it. On the contrary, I have to assert, in a temper profoundly venerant of it, that though we must not suppose everything is right when this is aroused, we may be sure that something is wrong when this is *not* aroused. The something wrong may be in the spectator or in the picture; and if the picture be demonstrably in accordance with truth, the odds are, that it is in the spectator; but there is wrong somewhere; for the work of the picture is indeed eminently to get at this imaginative power in the beholder, and all its facts are of no use whatever if it does not. No matter how much truth it tells if the hearer be asleep. Its first work is to wake him, then to teach him.

§ 13. Now, observe, while, as it penetrates into the nature of things, the imagination is pre-eminently a beholder of things, *as* they *are*, it is, in its creative function, an eminent beholder of things *when* and *where* they are NOT; a seer, that is, in the prophetic sense, calling "the things that are not as though they were,"[1] and for ever delighting to dwell on that which is not tangibly present. And its great function being the calling forth, or back, that which is not visible to bodily sense, it has of course been made to take delight in the fulfilment of its proper function, and pre-eminently to enjoy, and spend its energy on, things past and future, or out of sight, rather than things present, or in sight. So that if the imagination is to be called to take delight in any object, it will not be always well, if we can help it, to put the *real* object there, before it. The imagination would on the whole rather have it *not* there;—the reality and substance are rather in the imagination's way; it would think a good deal more of the

[1] [See 1 Corinthians i. 28, and Revelation i. 19.]

thing if it could not see it. Hence, that strange and sometimes fatal charm, which there is in all things as long as we wait for them, and the moment we have lost them; but which fades while we possess them;—that sweet bloom of all that is far away, which perishes under our touch. Yet the feeling of this is not a weakness; it is one of the most glorious gifts of the human mind, making the whole infinite future, and imperishable past, a richer inheritance, if faithfully inherited, than the changeful, frail, fleeting present: it is also one of the many witnesses in us to the truth that these present and tangible things are not meant to satisfy us. The instinct becomes a weakness only when it is weakly indulged, and when the faculty which was intended by God to give back to us what we have lost, and gild for us what is to come, is so perverted as only to darken what we possess. But, perverted or pure, the instinct itself is everlasting, and the substantial presence even of the things which we love the best, will inevitably and for ever be found wanting in *one* strange and tender charm, which belonged to the dreams of them.

§ 14. Another character of the imagination is equally constant, and, to our present inquiry, of yet greater importance. It is eminently a *weariable* faculty, eminently delicate, and incapable of bearing fatigue;[1] so that if we give it too many objects at a time to employ itself upon, or very grand ones for a long time together, it fails under the effort, becomes jaded, exactly as the limbs do by bodily fatigue, and incapable of answering any farther appeal till it has had rest. And this is the real nature of the weariness which is so often felt in travelling, from seeing too much. It is not that the monotony and number of the beautiful things seen have made them valueless, but that the imaginative power has been overtaxed; and, instead of letting it rest, the traveller, wondering to find himself dull,

[1] [Compare *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, No. 505, where Ruskin refers to this passage in connexion with a certain overfullness in some of Turner's pictures.]

and incapable of admiration, seeks for something more admirable, excites and torments, and drags the poor fainting imagination up by the shoulders: "Look at this, and look at that, and this more wonderful still!"—until the imaginative faculty faints utterly away, beyond all further torment, or pleasure, dead for many a day to come; and the despairing prodigal takes to horse-racing in the Campagna, good now for nothing else than that; whereas, if the imagination had only been laid down on the grass, among simple things, and left quiet for a little while, it would have come to itself gradually, recovered its strength and colour, and soon been fit for work again. So that, whenever the imagination is tired, it is necessary to find for it something, not *more* admirable but *less* admirable; such as in that weak state it can deal with; then give it peace, and it will recover.

§ 15. I well recollect the walk on which I first found out this; it was on the winding road from Sallenches, sloping up the hills towards St. Gervais, one cloudless Sunday afternoon.[1] The road circles softly between bits of rocky bank and mounded pasture; little cottages and chapels gleaming out from among the trees at every turn. Behind me, some leagues in length, rose the jagged range of the mountains of the Réposoir; on the other side of the valley, the mass of the Aiguille de Varens, heaving its seven thousand feet of cliff into the air at a single effort, its gentle gift of waterfall, the Nant d'Arpenaz, like a pillar of cloud at its feet; Mont Blanc and all its aiguilles, one silver flame, in front of me; marvellous blocks of mossy granite and dark glades of pine around me; but I could enjoy nothing, and could not for a long while make out what was the matter with me, until at last I discovered that if I confined myself to one thing,—and that a little thing,—a tuft of moss or a single crag at the top of the Varens, or a wreath or two of foam at the bottom of the Nant d'Arpenaz, I began to enjoy it directly, because then I had mind enough

[1] [It was in June 1849; see the passage from Ruskin's diary given above, in the Introduction, pp. xix.–xx.]

to put into the thing, and the enjoyment arose from the quantity of the imaginative energy I could bring to bear upon it; but when I looked at or thought of all together, moss, stones, Varens, Nant d'Arpenaz, and Mont Blanc, I had not mind enough to give to all, and none were of any value. The conclusion which would have been formed, upon this, by a German philosopher, would have been that the Mont Blanc *was* of no value; that he and his imagination only were of value; that the Mont Blanc, in fact, except so far as he was able to look at it, could not be considered as having any existence.[1] But the only conclusion which occurred to me as reasonable under the circumstances (I have seen no ground for altering it since) was, that I was an exceedingly small creature, much tired, and, at the moment, not a little stupid; for whom a blade of grass, or a wreath of foam, was quite food enough and to spare, and that if I tried to take any more, I should make myself ill. Whereupon, associating myself fraternally with some ants, who were deeply interested in the conveyance of some small sticks over the road, and rather, as I think they generally are, in too great a hurry about it, I returned home in a little while with great contentment; thinking how well it was ordered that, as Mont Blanc and his pine forests could not be everywhere, nor all the world come to see them, the human mind, on the whole, should enjoy itself most surely, in an ant-like manner, and be happy and busy with the bits of sticks and grains of crystal that fall in its way to be handled, in daily duty.

§ 16. It follows evidently from the first of these characters of the imagination, its dislike of substance and presence, that a picture has in some measure even an advantage with us in not being real. The imagination rejoices in having something to do, springs up with all its willing power, flattered and happy; and ready with its fairest colours and most tender pencilling, to prove itself worthy

[1] [See below, ch. xii. § 1, pp. 201–202.]

of the trust, and exalt into sweet supremacy the shadow that has been confided to its fondness. And thus, so far from its being at all an object to the painter to make his work look real, he ought to dread such a consummation as the loss of one of its most precious claims upon the heart. So far from striving to convince the beholder that what he sees is substance, his mind should be to what he paints as the fire to the body on the pile, burning away the ashes, leaving the unconquerable shade—an immortal dream. So certain is this, that the slightest local success in giving the deceptive appearance of reality—the imitation, for instance, of the texture of a bit of wood, with its grain in relief—will instantly destroy the charm of a whole picture; the imagination feels itself insulted and injured, and passes by with cold contempt; nay, however beautiful the whole scene may be, as of late in much of our highly wrought painting for the stage, the mere fact of its being deceptively real is enough to make us tire of it; we may be surprised and pleased for a moment, but the imagination will not on those terms be persuaded to give any of its help, and, in a quarter of an hour we wish the scene would change.

§ 17. "Well, but then, what becomes of all these long dogmatic chapters of yours about giving nothing but the truth, and as much truth as possible?"

The chapters are all quite right. "Nothing but the Truth," I say still. "As much Truth as possible," I say still. But truth so presented that it will need the help of the imagination to make it real.[1] Between the painter and the beholder, each doing his proper part, the reality should be sustained; and after the beholding imagination has come forward and done its best, then, with its help and in the full action of it, the beholder should be able to say, I feel as if I were at the real place, or seeing the real incident. But not without that help.

§ 18. Farther, in consequence of that other character of

[1] [In his copy for revision, Ruskin writes here in the margin—"I go beyond this now and say perfect reality." See, for instance, *Aratra Pentelici*, §§ 10, 122.]

the imagination, fatiguableness, it is a great advantage to the picture that it need not present too much at once, and that what it does present may be so chosen and ordered as not only to be more easily seized, but to give the imagination rest, and, as it were, places to lie down and stretch its limbs in; kindly vacancies, beguiling it back into action, with pleasant and cautious sequence of incident; all jarring thoughts being excluded, all vain redundance denied, and all just and sweet transition permitted.

And thus it is, that, for the most part, imperfect sketches, engravings, outlines, rude sculptures, and other forms of abstraction, possess a charm which the most finished picture frequently wants. For not only does the finished picture excite the imagination less, but, like nature itself, it *taxes* it more. None of it can be enjoyed till the imagination is brought to bear upon it; and the details of the completed picture are so numerous, that it needs greater strength and willingness in the beholder to follow them all out; the redundance, perhaps, being not too great for the mind of a careful observer, but too great for a casual or careless observer. So that, although the perfection of art will always consist in the utmost *acceptable* completion, yet, as every added idea will increase the difficulty of apprehension, and every added touch advance the dangerous realism which makes the imagination languid, the difference between a noble and ignoble painter is in nothing more sharply defined than in this,—that he first wishes to put into his work as much truth as possible, and yet to keep it looking *un*-real; the second wishes to get through his work lazily, with as little truth as possible, and yet to make it look real; and, so far as they add colour to their abstract sketch, the first realizes for the sake of the colour, and the second colours for the sake of the realization.*

§ 19. And then, lastly, it is another infinite advantage

* Several other points connected with this subject have already been noticed in *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. chap. iv. § 21, etc. [Vol. XI. p. 214.]

possessed by the picture, that in these various differences from reality it becomes the expression of the power and intelligence of a companionable human soul. In all this choice, arrangement, penetrative sight, and kindly guidance, we recognize a supernatural operation, and perceive, not merely the landscape or incident as in a mirror; but, besides, the presence of what, after all, may perhaps be the most wonderful piece of divine work in the whole matter—the great human spirit through which it is manifested to us. So that, although with respect to many important scenes, it might, as we saw above, be one of the most precious gifts that could be given us to see them with *our own eyes*, yet also in many things it is more desirable to be permitted to see them with the eyes of others; and although, to the small, conceited, and affected painter displaying his narrow knowledge and tiny dexterities, our only word may be, "Stand aside from between that nature and me:" yet to the great imaginative painter — greater a million times in every faculty of soul than we—our word may wisely be, "Come between this nature and me—this nature which is too great and too wonderful for me; temper it for me, interpret it to me; let me see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and have help and strength from your great spirit."

All the noblest pictures have this character. They are true or inspired ideals, seen in a moment to *be* ideal; that is to say, the result of all the highest powers of the imagination, engaged in the discovery and apprehension of the purest truths, and having so arranged them as best to show their preciousness and exalt their clearness. They are always orderly, always one, ruled by one great purpose throughout, in the fulfilment of which every atom of the detail is called to help, and would be missed if removed; this peculiar oneness being the result, not of obedience to any teachable law, but of the magnificence of tone in the perfect mind, which accepts only what is good for its great purposes, rejects whatever is foreign or redundant, and

instinctively and instantaneously ranges whatever it accepts, in sublime subordination and helpful brotherhood.

§ 20. Then, this being the greatest art, the lowest art is the mimicry of it,—the subordination of nothing to nothing; the elaborate arrangement of sightlessness and emptiness: the order which has no object; the unity which has no life, and the law which has no love; the light which has nothing to illumine, and shadow which has nothing to relieve.*

§ 21. And then, between these two, comes the wholesome, happy, and noble—though not noblest—art of simple transcript from nature; into which, so far as our modern Pre-Raphaelitism falls, it will indeed do sacred service in ridding us of the old fallacies and componencies, but cannot itself rise above the level of simple and happy usefulness. So far as it is to be great, it must add,—and so far as it *is* great, has already added,—the great imaginative element to all its faithfulness in transcript. And for this reason, I said in the close of my Edinburgh Lectures,[1] that Pre-Raphaelitism, as long as it confined itself to the simple copying of nature, could not take the character of the highest class of art. But it has already, almost unconsciously, supplied the defect, and taken that character, in all its best results; and, so far as it ought, hereafter, it will assuredly do so, as soon as it is permitted to maintain itself in any other position than that of stern antagonism to the composition-teachers around it. I say "so far as it

* "Though my pictures should have nothing else, they shall have Chiaroscuro."—Constable (in Leslie's Life of him[2]). It is singular to reflect what that fatal Chiaroscuro has done to art, in the full extent of its influence. It has been not only shadow, but shadow of Death; passing over the face of the ancient art, as death itself might over a fair human countenance; whispering, as it reduced it to the white projections and lightless orbits of the skull, "Thy face shall have nothing else, but it shall have Chiaroscuro."

[1] [See Vol. XII. p. 161, § 138, of the *Lectures on Architecture and Painting.*]

[2] [The saying occurs (slightly otherwise worded) at p. 226 of the 2nd (1845) ed. of Leslie's *Life*. It is again quoted by Ruskin in *Academy Notes*, 1859 (*s.* "French Exhibition," *ad fin.*), where he adds, "The sacrifice was accepted by the Fates, but the prayer denied. His pictures *had* nothing else; but they had *not* chiaroscuro." For a note on other references to Constable, see Vol. III. p. 45.]

ought," because, as already noticed in that same place, we have enough, and to spare, of noble *inventful* pictures: so many have we, that we let them moulder away on the walls and roofs of Italy without one regretful thought about them. But of simple transcripts from nature, till now we have had none; even Van Eyck and Albert Dürer having been strongly filled with the spirit of grotesque idealism; so that the Pre-Raphaelites have, to the letter, fulfilled Steele's description of the author, who "determined to write in an entirely new manner, and describe things exactly as they took place."[1]

§ 22. We have now, I believe, in some sort answered most of the questions which were suggested to us during our statement of the nature of great art. I could recapitulate the answers; but perhaps the reader is already sufficiently wearied of the recurrence of the terms "Ideal," "Nature," "Imagination," "Invention," and will hardly care to see them again interchanged among each other, in the formalities of a summary. What difficulties may yet occur to him, will, I think, disappear as he either re-reads the passages which suggested them, or follows out the consideration of the subject for himself:—this very simple, but very precious conclusion being continually remembered by him as the sum of all; that greatness in art (as assuredly in all other things, but more distinctly in this than in most of them) is not a teachable[2] nor gainable thing, but *the expression of a mind of a God-made great man;* that teach, or preach, or labour as you will, everlasting difference is set between one man's capacity and another's;[3] and that this God-given supremacy is the priceless thing, always just as rare in the world at one time as another. What you can manufacture or communicate, you can lower the price of, but this mental supremacy is incommunicable; you will never multiply its quantity, nor lower its price; and nearly

[1] [See No. 9 of *The Tatler*.]
[2] [Compare Vol. XII. p. 352.]
[3] [Compare Vol. VIII. p. 167.]

the best thing that men can generally do is to set themselves, not to the attainment, but the discovery of this; learning to know gold, when we see it, from iron-glance, and diamonds from flint-sand, being for most of us a more profitable employment than trying to make diamonds out of our own charcoal. And for this God-made supremacy, I generally have used, and shall continue to use, the word Inspiration, not carelessly nor lightly, but in all logical calmness and perfect reverence. We English have many false ideas about reverence; we should be shocked, for instance, to see a market-woman come into church with a basket of eggs on her arm: we think it more reverent to lock her out till Sunday; and to surround the church with respectability of iron railings, and defend it with pacing inhabitation of beadles. I believe this to be *ir*reverence; and that it is more truly reverent, when the market-woman, hot and hurried, at six in the morning, her head much confused with calculations of the probable price of eggs, can nevertheless get within church porch, and church aisle, and church chancel, lay the basket down on the very steps of the altar, and receive thereat so much of help and hope as may serve her for the day's work. In like manner we are solemnly, but I think not wisely, shocked at any one who comes hurriedly into church, in any figurative way, with his basket on his arm; and perhaps so long as we feel it so, it is better to keep the basket out. But, as for this one commodity of high mental supremacy, it cannot be kept out, for the very fountain of it is in the church wall, and there is no other right word for it but this of Inspiration; a word, indeed, often ridiculously perverted, and irreverently used of fledgling poets and pompous orators—no one being offended then: and yet cavilled at when quietly used of the spirit that is in a truly great man; cavilled at, chiefly, it seems to me, because we expect to know inspiration by the look of it. Let a man have shaggy hair, dark eyes, a rolling voice, plenty of animal energy, and a facility of rhyming

or sentencing, and—improvisatore or sentimentalist—we call him "inspired" willingly enough; but let him be a rough, quiet worker, not proclaiming himself melodiously in anywise, but familiar with us, unpretending, and letting all his littleness and feebleness be seen, unhindered,—wearing an ill-cut coat withal; and, though he be such a man as is only sent upon the earth once in five hundred years, for some special human teaching, it is irreverent to call him "inspired." But, be it irreverent or not, this word I must always use; and the rest of what work I have here before me, is simply to prove the truth of it, with respect to the one among these mighty spirits whom we have just lost; who divided his hearers, as many an inspired speaker has done before now, into two great sects—a large and a narrow; these searching the Nature-scripture calmly, "whether those things were so," and those standing haughtily on their Mars' hill, asking, "What will this babbler say?"[1]

[1] [Acts xvii. 11, 18.]

CHAPTER XI

OF THE NOVELTY OF LANDSCAPE

§ 1. Having now obtained, I trust, clear ideas, up to a certain point, of what is generally right and wrong in all art, both in conception and in workmanship, we have to apply these laws of right to the particular branch of art which is the subject of our present inquiry, namely, landscape-painting. Respecting which, after the various meditations into which we have been led on the high duties and ideals of art, it may not improbably occur to us first to ask,—whether it be worth inquiring about at all.

That question, perhaps the reader thinks, should have been asked and answered before I had written, or he read, two volumes and a half about it. So I *had* answered it in my own mind; but it seems time now to give the grounds for this answer. If, indeed, the reader has never suspected that landscape-painting was anything but good, right, and healthy work, I should be sorry to put any doubt of its being so into his mind; but if, as seems to me more likely, he, living in this busy and perhaps somewhat calamitous age, has some suspicion that landscape-painting is but an idle and empty business, not worth all our long talk about it, then, perhaps, he will be pleased to have such suspicion done away, before troubling himself farther with these disquisitions.

§ 2. I should rather be glad, than otherwise, that he *had* formed some suspicion on this matter. If he has at all admitted the truth of anything hitherto said respecting great art, and its choices of subject, it seems to me he ought, by this time, to be questioning with himself whether road-side weeds, old cottages, broken stones, and such other

materials, be worthy matters for grave men to busy themselves in the imitation of. And I should like him to probe this doubt to the deep of it, and bring all his misgivings out to the broad light, that we may see how we are to deal with them, or ascertain if indeed they are too well-founded to be dealt with.

§ 3. And to this end I would ask him now to imagine himself entering, for the first time in his life, the room of the Old Water-Colour Society:[1] and to suppose that he has entered it, not for the sake of a quiet examination of the paintings one by one, but in order to seize such ideas as it may generally suggest respecting the state and meaning of modern, as compared with elder, art. I suppose him, of course, that he may be capable of such a comparison, to be in some degree familiar with the different forms in which art has developed itself within the periods historically known to us; but never, till that moment, to have seen any completely modern work. So prepared, and so unprepared, he would, as his ideas began to arrange themselves, be first struck by the number of paintings representing blue mountains, clear lakes, and ruined castles or cathedrals, and he would say to himself: "There is something strange in the mind of these modern people! Nobody ever cared about blue mountains before, or tried to paint the broken stones of old walls." And the more he considered the subject, the more he would feel the peculiarity; and, as he thought over the art of Greeks and Romans, he would still repeat, with increasing certainty of conviction: "Mountains! I remember none. The Greeks did not seem, as artists, to know that such things were in the world. They carved, or variously represented, men, and horses, and beasts, and birds, and all kinds of living creatures,—yes, even down to cuttle-fish; and trees, in a sort of way; but not so much as the outline of a mountain; and as for lakes, they merely showed they knew the difference between salt and fresh

[1] [A favourite haunt of Ruskin's: see *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Preface, § 28.]

water by the fish they put into each." Then he would pass on to mediæval art; and still he would be obliged to repeat: "Mountains! I remember none. Some careless and jagged arrangements of blue spires or spikes on the horizon, and, here and there, an attempt at representing an overhanging rock with a hole through it; but merely in order to divide the light behind some human figure. Lakes! No, nothing of the kind,—only blue bays of sea put in to fill up the background when the painter could not think of anything else. Broken-down buildings! No; for the most part very complete and well-appointed buildings, if any; and never buildings at all, but to give place or explanation to some circumstance of human conduct." And then he would look up again to the modern pictures, observing, with an increasing astonishment, that here the human interest had, in many cases, altogether disappeared.[1] That mountains, instead of being used only as a blue ground for the relief of the heads of saints, were themselves the exclusive subjects of reverent contemplation; that their ravines, and peaks, and forests, were all painted with an appearance of as much enthusiasm as had formerly been devoted to the dimples of beauty, or the frowns of asceticism; and that all the living interest which was still supposed necessary to the scene, might be supplied by a traveller in a slouched hat, a beggar in a scarlet cloak, or, in default of these, even by a heron or a wild duck.

§ 4. And if he could entirely divest himself of his own modern habits of thought, and regard the subjects in question with the feelings of a knight or monk of the Middle Ages, it might be a question whether those feelings would not rapidly verge towards contempt. "What!" he might perhaps mutter to himself, "here are human beings spending the whole of their lives in making pictures of bits of stone and runlets of water, withered sticks and flying

[1] [Compare the briefer account of the rise of landscape art in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 84 *seq.*, Vol. XII. pp. 109–123.]

fogs, and actually not a picture of the gods or the heroes! none of the saints or the martyrs! none of the angels and demons! none of councils or battles, or any other single thing worth the thought of a man! Trees and clouds indeed! as if I should not see as many trees as I cared to see, and more, in the first half of my day's journey to-morrow, or as if it mattered to any man whether the sky were clear or cloudy, so long as his armour did not get too hot in the sun!"

§ 5. There can be no question that this would have been somewhat the tone of thought with which either a Lacedæmonian, a soldier of Rome in her strength, or a knight of the thirteenth century, would have been apt to regard these particular forms of our present art. Nor can there be any question that, in many respects, their judgment would have been just. It is true that the indignation of the Spartan or Roman would have been equally excited against any appearance of luxurious industry; but the mediæval knight would, to the full, have admitted the nobleness of art; only he would have had it employed in decorating his church or his prayer-book, not in imitating moors and clouds. And the feelings of all the three would have agreed in this,—that their main ground of offence must have been the want of *seriousness* and *purpose* in what they saw. They would all have admitted the nobleness of whatever conduced to the honour of the gods, or the power of the nation; but they would not have understood how the skill of human life could be wisely spent in that which did no honour either to Jupiter or to the Virgin; and which in no wise tended, apparently, either to the accumulation of wealth, the excitement of patriotism, or the advancement of morality.

§ 6. And exactly so far forth their judgment would be just, as the landscape-painting could indeed be shown, for others as well as for them, to be art of this nugatory kind; and so far forth unjust, as that painting could be shown to depend upon, or cultivate, certain sensibilities which neither the Greek nor mediæval knight possessed, and which

have resulted from some extraordinary change in human nature since their time. We have no right to assume, without very accurate examination of it, that this change has been an ennobling one. The simple fact, that we are, in some strange way, different from all the great races that have existed before us, cannot at once be received as the proof of our own greatness; nor can it be granted, without any question, that we have a legitimate subject of complacency in being under the influence of feelings, with which neither Miltiades nor the Black Prince, neither Homer nor Dante, neither Socrates nor St. Francis, could for an instant have sympathized.

§ 7. Whether, however, this fact be one to excite our pride or not, it is assuredly one to excite our deepest interest. The fact itself is certain. For nearly six thousand years the energies of man have pursued certain beaten paths, manifesting some constancy of feeling throughout all that period, and involving some fellowship at heart, among the various nations who by turns succeeded or surpassed each other in the several aims of art or policy. So that, for these thousands of years, the whole human race might be to some extent described in general terms. Man was a creature separated from all others by his instinctive sense of an Existence superior to his own, invariably manifesting this sense of the being of a God more strongly in proportion to his own perfectness of mind and body; and making enormous and self-denying efforts, in order to obtain some persuasion of the immediate presence or approval of the Divinity. So that, on the whole, the best things he did were done as in the presence, or for the honour, of his gods; and, whether in statues, to help him to imagine them, or temples raised to their honour, or acts of self-sacrifice done in the hope of their love, he brought whatever was best and skilfullest in him into their service, and lived in a perpetual subjection to their unseen power. Also, he was always anxious to know something definite about them; and his chief books, songs, and pictures were filled

with legends about them, or specially devoted to illustration of their lives and nature.

§ 8. Next to these gods he was always anxious to know something about his human ancestors; fond of exalting the memory, and telling or painting the history of old rulers and benefactors; yet full of an enthusiastic confidence in himself, as having in many ways advanced beyond the best efforts of past time; and eager to record his own doings for future fame. He was a creature eminently warlike, placing his principal pride in dominion; eminently beautiful, and having great delight in his own beauty; setting forth this beauty by every species of invention in dress, and rendering his arms and accoutrements superbly decorative of his form. He took, however, very little interest in anything but what belonged to humanity; caring in no wise for the external world, except as it influenced his own destiny; honouring the lightning because it could strike him, the sea because it could drown him, the fountains because they gave him drink, and the grass because it yielded him seed; but utterly incapable of feeling any special happiness in the love of such things, or any earnest emotion about them, considered as separate from man; therefore giving no time to the study of them;—knowing little of herbs, except only which were hurtful and which healing; of stones, only which would glitter brightest in a crown, or last the longest in a wall: of the wild beasts, which were best for food, and which the stoutest quarry for the hunter; —thus spending only on the lower creatures and inanimate things his waste energy, his dullest thoughts, his most languid emotions, and reserving all his acuter intellect for researches into his own nature and that of the gods; all his strength of will for the acquirement of political or moral power; all his sense of beauty for things immediately connected with his own person and life; and all his deep affections for domestic or divine companionship.

Such, in broad light and brief terms, was man for five thousand years. Such he is no longer. Let us consider

what he is now, comparing the descriptions clause by clause.

§ 9. I. He *was* invariably sensible of the existence of gods, and went about all his speculations or works holding this as an acknowledged fact, making his best efforts in their service. *Now* he is capable of going through life with hardly any positive idea on this subject,—doubting, fearing, suspecting, analyzing,—doing everything, in fact, *but* believing; hardly ever getting quite up to that point which hitherto was wont to be the starting-point for all generations. And human work has accordingly hardly any reference to spiritual beings, but is done either from a patriotic or personal interest,—either to benefit mankind, or reach some selfish end, not (I speak of human work in the broad sense) to please the gods.[1]

II. He *was* a beautiful creature, setting forth this beauty by all means in his power, and depending upon it for much of his authority over his fellows. So that the ruddy cheek of David, and the ivory skin of Atrides, and the towering presence of Saul, and the blue eyes of Cœur de Lion, were among chief reasons why they should be kings; and it was one of the aims of all education, and of all dress, to make the presence of the human form stately and lovely. *Now* it has become the task of grave philosophy partly to depreciate or conceal this bodily beauty; and even by those who esteem it in their hearts, it is not made one of the great ends of education; man has become, upon the whole, an ugly animal, and is not ashamed of his ugliness.

III. He *was* eminently warlike. He is *now* gradually becoming more and more ashamed of all the arts and aims of battle. So that the desire of dominion, which was once frankly confessed or boasted of as a heroic passion, is now sternly reprobated or cunningly disclaimed.

IV. He *used* to take no interest in anything but what immediately concerned himself. *Now*, he has deep interest

[1] [Here, again, compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 113 *seq.*, Vol. XII. pp. 138–145.]

in the abstract nature of things, inquires as eagerly into the laws which regulate the economy of the material world, as into those of his own being, and manifests a passionate admiration of inanimate objects, closely resembling, in its elevation and tenderness, the affection which he bears to those living souls with which he is brought into the nearest fellowship.

§ 10. It is this last change only which is to be the subject of our present inquiry; but it cannot be doubted that it is closely connected with all the others, and that we can only thoroughly understand its nature by considering it in this connection. For, regarded by itself, we might, perhaps, too rashly assume it to be a natural consequence of the progress of the race. There appears to be a diminution of selfishness in it, and a more extended and heartfelt desire of understanding the manner of God's working; and this the more, because one of the permanent characters of this change is a greater accuracy in the statement of external facts. When the eyes of men were fixed first upon themselves, and upon nature solely and secondarily as bearing upon their interests, it was of less consequence to them what the ultimate laws of nature were, than what their immediate effects were upon human beings. Hence they could rest satisfied with phenomena instead of principles, and accepted without scrutiny every fable which seemed sufficiently or gracefully to account for those phenomena. But so far as the eyes of men are now withdrawn from themselves, and turned upon the inanimate things about them, the results cease to be of importance, and the laws become essential.

§ 11. In these respects, it might easily appear to us that this change was assuredly one of steady and natural advance. But when we contemplate the others above noted, of which it is clearly one of the branches or consequences, we may suspect ourselves of over-rashness in our self-congratulation, and admit the necessity of a scrupulous analysis both of the feeling itself and of its tendencies.

Of course a complete analysis, or anything like it, would

involve a treatise on the whole history of the world. I shall merely endeavour to note some of the leading and more interesting circumstances bearing on the subject, and to show sufficient practical ground for the conclusion, that landscape-painting is indeed a noble and useful art, though one not long known by man. I shall therefore examine, as best I can, the effect of landscape, 1st, on the Classical mind; 2ndly, on the Mediæval mind; and lastly, on the Modern mind. But there is one point of some interest respecting the effect of it on *any* mind, which must be settled first; and this I will endeavour to do in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

OF THE PATHETIC FALLACY

§ 1. German dulness, and English affectation, have of late much multiplied among us the use of two of the most objectionable words that were ever coined by the troublesomeness of metaphysicians,—namely, "Objective," and "Subjective."[1]

No words can be more exquisitely, and in all points, useless; and I merely speak of them that I may, at once and for ever, get them out of my way, and out of my reader's. But to get that done, they must be explained.

The word "Blue," say certain philosophers, means the sensation of colour which the human eye receives in looking at the open sky, or at a bell gentian.

Now, say they farther, as this sensation can only be felt when the eye is turned to the object, and as, therefore, no such sensation is produced by the object when nobody looks at it, therefore the thing, when it is not looked at, is not blue; and thus (say they) there are many qualities of things which depend as much on something else as on themselves. To be sweet, a thing must have a taster; it is only sweet while it is being tasted, and if the tongue had not the capacity of taste, then the sugar would not have the quality of sweetness.

And then they agree that the qualities of things which thus depend upon our perception of them, and upon our

[1] [The words in the modern philosophical sense were "re-introduced" by Coleridge (*Biographia Literaria*, 1817, ch. x.); De Quincey, writing in the same year as Ruskin here (1856), remarks, in using the word "objective," that "this term, so nearly unintelligible in 1821, so intensely scholastic, and, consequently, when surrounded by familiar and vernacular words, so apparently pedantic, yet, on the other hand, so indispensable to accurate thinking, and to wide thinking, has since 1821 become too common to need any apology" (*Confessions of an Opium Eater*).]

human nature as affected by them, shall be called Subjective; and the qualities of things which they always have, irrespective of any other nature, as roundness or squareness, shall be called Objective.

From these ingenious views the step is very easy to a farther opinion, that it does not much matter what things are in themselves, but only what they are to us; and that the only real truth of them is their appearance to, or effect upon, us. From which position, with a hearty desire for mystification, and much egotism, selfishness, shallowness, and impertinence, a philosopher may easily go so far as to believe, and say, that everything in the world depends upon his seeing or thinking of it, and that nothing, therefore, exists, but what he sees or thinks of.[1]

§ 2. Now, to get rid of all these ambiguities and troublesome words at once, be it observed that the word "Blue" does *not* mean the *sensation* caused by a gentian on the human eye; but it means the *power* of producing that sensation: and this power is always there, in the thing, whether we are there to experience it or not, and would remain there though there were not left a man on the face of the earth. Precisely in the same way gunpowder has a power of exploding. It will not explode if you put no match to it. But it has always the power of so exploding, and is therefore called an explosive compound, which it very positively and assuredly is, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary.

In like manner, a gentian does not produce the sensation of blueness, if you don't look at it. But it has always the power of doing so; its particles being everlastingly so arranged by its Maker. And, therefore, the gentian and the sky are always verily blue, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary; and if you do not see them blue when you look at them, it is not their fault, but yours.*

* It is quite true, that in all qualities involving sensation, there may be a doubt whether different people receive the same sensation from the same

[1] [Compare p. 184, above.]

§ 3. Hence I would say to these philosophers: If, instead of using the sonorous phrase, "It is objectively so," you will use the plain old phrase, "It *is* so," and if instead of the sonorous phrase, "It is subjectively so," you will say, in plain old English, "It does so," or "It seems so to me," you will, on the whole, be more intelligible to your fellow-creatures; and besides, if you find that a thing which generally "does so" to other people (as a gentian looks blue to most men), does *not* so to you, on any particular occasion, you will not fall into the impertinence of saying, that the thing is not so, or did not so, but you will say simply (what you will be all the better for speedily finding out), that something is the matter with you. If you find that you cannot explode the gunpowder, you will not declare that all gunpowder is subjective, and all explosion imaginary, but you will simply suspect and declare yourself to be an ill-made match. Which, on the whole, though there may be a distant chance of a mistake about it, is, nevertheless, the wisest conclusion you can come to until further experiment.*

thing (compare Part II. sect. i. ch. v. § 6[1]); but, though this makes such facts not distinctly explicable, it does not alter the facts themselves. I derive a certain sensation, which I call sweetness, from sugar. That is a fact. Another person feels a sensation, which *he* also calls sweetness, from sugar. That is also a fact. The sugar's power to produce these two sensations, which we suppose to be, and which are, in all probability, very nearly the same in both of us, and, on the whole, in the human race, is its sweetness.

* In fact (for I may as well, for once, meet our German friends in their own style), all that has been objected to us on the subject seems subject to this great objection; that the subjection of all things (subject to no exceptions) to senses which are, in us, both subject and object, and objects of perpetual contempt, cannot but make it our ultimate object to subject *ourselves* to the senses, and to remove whatever objections existed to such subjection. So that, finally, that which is the subject of examination or object of attention, uniting thus in itself the characters of subness and obness (so that, that which has no obness in it should be called sub-subjective, or a sub-subject, and that which has no subness in it should be called upper or ober-objective, or an ob-object); and we also, who suppose ourselves the objects of every arrangement, and are certainly the subjects of every sensual impression, thus uniting

[1] [In this edition, Vol. III. p. 160.]

§ 4. Now, therefore, putting these tiresome and absurd words quite out of our way, we may go on at our ease to examine the point in question,—namely, the difference between the ordinary, proper, and true appearances of things to us; and the extraordinary, or false appearances, when we are under the influence of emotion, or contemplative fancy;* false appearances, I say, as being entirely unconnected with any real power or character in the object, and only imputed to it by us.

For instance—

> "The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
> Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold." †

This is very beautiful, and yet very untrue. The crocus is not a spendthrift, but a hardy plant; its yellow is not gold, but saffron. How is it that we enjoy so much the having it put into our heads that it is anything else than a plain crocus?

It is an important question. For, throughout our past reasonings about art, we have always found that nothing could be good or useful, or ultimately pleasurable, which was untrue. But here is something pleasurable in written poetry, which is nevertheless *un*true. And what is more, if we think over our favourite poetry, we shall find it full

in ourselves, in an obverse or adverse manner, the characters of obness and subness, must both become metaphysically dejected or rejected, nothing remaining in *us* objective, but subjectivity, and the very objectivity of the object being lost in the abyss of this subjectivity of the Human.

There is, however, some meaning in the above sentence, if the reader cares to make it out; but in a pure German sentence of the highest style there is often none whatever. See Appendix II., "German Philosophy" [p. 424.][1]

* Contemplative, in the sense explained in Part III. sec. ii. chap. iv. [Vol. IV. pp. 289 *seq.*]

† Holmes (Oliver Wendell), quoted by Miss Mitford in her *Recollections of a Literary Life.*[2]

[1] [See also for Ruskin's dislike of such philosophising, *Præterita*, i. ch. xii. § 252.]

[2] [The lines are from *Astraea, a Poem delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale College:* Boston, 1850. They are quoted in vol. iii. ch. 2 of Miss Mitford's *Recollections* (1852).]

of this kind of fallacy, and that we like it all the more for being so.

§ 5. It will appear also, on consideration of the matter, that this fallacy is of two principal kinds. Either, as in this case of the crocus, it is the fallacy of wilful fancy, which involves no real expectation that it will be believed; or else it is a fallacy caused by an excited state of the feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational. Of the cheating of the fancy we shall have to speak presently;[1] but in this chapter, I want to examine the nature of the other error, that which the mind admits when affected strongly by emotion. Thus, for instance, in *Alton Locke*,—

> "They rowed her in across the rolling foam—
> The cruel, crawling foam."[2]

The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the "pathetic fallacy."

§ 6. Now we are in the habit of considering this fallacy as eminently a character of poetical description, and the temper of mind in which we allow it, as one eminently poetical, because passionate. But I believe, if we look well into the matter, that we shall find the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness,—that it is only the second order of poets who much delight in it.*

* I admit two orders of poets, but no third; and by these two orders I mean the creative (Shakspeare, Homer, Dante), and Reflective or Perceptive (Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson). But both of these must be *first*-rate in their range, though their range is different; and with poetry second-rate

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[1] [See below, ch. xiii. § 13, p. 231.]

[2] [Kingsley's song first appeared in ch. xxvi. of *Alton Locke* (1850); for another reference to the expression "crawling foam," see *Val d'Arno*, § 170.]

Thus, when Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron "as dead leaves flutter from a bough,"[1] he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and *those* are leaves; he makes no confusion of one with the other. But when Coleridge speaks of

> "The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,"[2]

he has a morbid, that is to say, a so far false, idea about the leaf; he fancies a life in it, and will, which there are

in *quality* no one ought to be allowed to trouble mankind. There is quite enough of the best,—much more than we can ever read or enjoy in the length of a life; and it is a literal wrong or sin in any person to encumber us with inferior work. I have no patience with apologies made by young pseudo-poets, "that they believe there is *some* good in what they have written: that they hope to do better in time," etc. *Some* good! If there is not *all* good, there is no good. If they ever hope to do better, why do they trouble us now? Let them rather courageously burn all they have done, and wait for the better days. There are few men, ordinarily educated, who in moments of strong feeling could not strike out a poetical thought, and afterwards polish it so as to be presentable. But men of sense know better than so to waste their time; and those who sincerely love poetry, know the touch of the master's hand on the chords too well to fumble among them after him. Nay, more than this, all inferior poetry is an injury to the good, inasmuch as it takes away the freshness of rhymes, blunders upon and gives a wretched commonalty to good thoughts; and, in general, adds to the weight of human weariness in a most woful and culpable manner. There are few thoughts likely to come across ordinary men, which have not already been expressed by greater men in the best possible way; and it is a wiser, more generous, more noble thing to remember and point out the perfect words, than to invent poorer ones, wherewith to encumber temporarily the world.[3]

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[1] ["Come d'autunno si levan le foglie": *Inferno*, iii. 112.]

[2] [*Christabel*, part i.]

[3] [In the MS. Ruskin adds an illustration:—

> "That thought about streams and human life, for instance, which everybody must hit upon sometimes—here it is, expressed gravely by Metastasio, lightly by Tennyson. The man must think much of himself who dares meddle with it more."

He adds a reference to the passages—"Aqua . . . fin che ritorna" in Metastasio, and "p. 104 of *Maud*," *i.e.* the lines in "The Brook" (first published with *Maud* in 1855): "For men may come and men may go, But I go on for ever."]

not; confuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music. Here, however, there is some beauty, even in the morbid passage; but take an instance in Homer and Pope. Without the knowledge of Ulysses, Elpenor, his youngest follower, has fallen from an upper chamber in the Circean palace, and has been left dead, unmissed by his leader or companions, in the haste of their departure. They cross the sea to the Cimmerian land; and Ulysses summons the shades from Tartarus. The first which appears is that of the lost Elpenor. Ulysses, amazed, and in exactly the spirit of bitter and terrified lightness which is seen in Hamlet,* addresses the spirit with the simple, startled words:—

"Elpenor! How camest thou under the shadowy darkness? Hast thou come faster on foot than I in my black ship?" [1]

Which Pope renders thus:—

"O, say, what angry power Elpenor led
To glide in shades, and wander with the dead?
How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoined,
Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind?"

I sincerely hope the reader finds no pleasure here, either in the nimbleness of the sail, or the laziness of the wind! And yet how is it that these conceits are so painful now, when they have been pleasant to us in the other instances?

§ 7. For a very simple reason. They are not a *pathetic* fallacy at all, for they are put into the mouth of the wrong passion—a passion which never could possibly have spoken them—agonized curiosity. Ulysses wants to know the facts of the matter; and the very last thing his mind could do at the moment would be to pause, or suggest in any wise what was *not* a fact. The delay in the first three lines, and

* "Well said, old mole! canst work i' the ground so fast?"

[1] [*Odyssey*, xi. 56, 57; *Hamlet*, i. 5.]

conceit in the last, jar upon us instantly like the most frightful discord in music. No poet of true imaginative power could possibly have written the passage.*

Therefore we see that the spirit of truth must guide us in some sort, even in our enjoyment of fallacy. Coleridge's fallacy has no discord in it, but Pope's has set our teeth on edge. Without farther questioning, I will endeavour to state the main bearings of this matter.

§ 8. The temperament which admits the pathetic fallacy, is, as I said above, that of a mind and body in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away, or over-clouded, or over-dazzled by emotion; and it is a more or less noble state, according to the force of the emotion which has induced it. For it is no credit to a man that he is not morbid or inaccurate in his perceptions, when he has no strength of feeling to warp them; and it is in general a sign of higher capacity and stand in the ranks of being, that the emotions should be strong enough to vanquish, partly, the intellect, and make it believe what they choose. But it is still a grander condition when the intellect also rises, till it is strong enough to assert its rule against, or together with, the utmost efforts of the passions; and the whole man stands in an iron glow, white hot, perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts, losing none of his weight.

* It is worth while comparing the way a similar question is put by the exquisite sincerity of Keats:—

> "He wept, and his bright tears
> Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
> Thus, with half-shut, suffused eyes, he stood;
> While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
> With solemn step an awful goddess came,
> And there was purport in her looks for him,
> Which he with eager guess began to read
> Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said,
> '*How camest thou over the unfooted sea?*'"[1]

[1] [*Hyperion*, book iii.]

So, then, we have the three ranks: the man who perceives rightly, because he does not feel, and to whom the primrose is very accurately the primrose, because he does not love it. Then, secondly, the man who perceives wrongly, because he feels, and to whom the primrose is anything else than a primrose: a star, or a sun, or a fairy's shield, or a forsaken maiden. And then, lastly, there is the man who perceives rightly in spite of his feelings, and to whom the primrose is for ever nothing else than itself—a little flower apprehended in the very plain and leafy fact of it, whatever and how many soever the associations and passions may be that crowd around it. And, in general, these three classes may be rated in comparative order, as the men who are not poets at all, and the poets of the second order, and the poets of the first; only however great a man may be, there are always some subjects which *ought* to throw him off his balance; some, by which his poor human capacity of thought should be conquered, and brought into the inaccurate and vague state of perception, so that the language of the highest inspiration becomes broken, obscure, and wild in metaphor, resembling that of the weaker man, overborne by weaker things.

§ 9. And thus, in full, there are four classes: the men who feel nothing, and therefore see truly; the men who feel strongly, think weakly, and see untruly (second order of poets); the men who feel strongly, think strongly, and see truly (first order of poets); and the men who, strong as human creatures can be, are yet submitted to influences stronger than they, and see in a sort untruly, because what they see is inconceivably above them. This last is the usual condition of prophetic inspiration.

§ 10. I separate these classes, in order that their character may be clearly understood; but of course they are united each to the other by imperceptible transitions, and the same mind, according to the influences to which it is subjected, passes at different times into the various states. Still, the difference between the great and less man is, on

the whole, chiefly in this point of *alterability*. That is to say, the one knows too much, and perceives and feels too much of the past and future, and of all things beside and around that which immediately affects him, to be in any wise shaken by it. His mind is made up; his thoughts have an accustomed current; his ways are steadfast; it is not this or that new sight which will at once unbalance him. He is tender to impression at the surface, like a rock with deep moss upon it; but there is too much mass of him to be moved. The smaller man, with the same degree of sensibility, is at once carried off his feet; he wants to do something he did not want to do before; he views all the universe in a new light through his tears; he is gay or enthusiastic, melancholy or passionate, as things come and go to him. Therefore the high creative poet might even be thought, to a great extent, impassive (as shallow people think Dante stern), receiving indeed all feelings to the full, but having a great centre of reflection and knowledge in which he stands serene, and watches the feeling, as it were, from afar off.

Dante, in his most intense moods, has entire command of himself, and can look around calmly, at all moments, for the image or the word that will best tell what he sees to the upper or lower world.[1] But Keats and Tennyson, and the poets of the second order, are generally themselves subdued by the feelings under which they write, or, at least, write as choosing to be so; and therefore admit certain expressions and modes of thought which are in some sort diseased or false.

§ 11. Now so long as we see that the *feeling* is true, we pardon, or are even pleased by, the confessed fallacy of sight which it induces: we are pleased, for instance, with those lines of Kingsley's above quoted, not because they fallaciously describe foam, but because they faithfully describe sorrow. But the moment the mind of the speaker becomes cold, that moment every such expression becomes

[1] [See, for a characteristic instance, the simile of the tailor, *Paradiso*, xxxii. 110–111.]

untrue, as being for ever untrue in the external facts. And there is no greater baseness in literature than the habit of using these metaphorical expressions in cool blood. An inspired writer, in full impetuosity of passion, may speak wisely and truly of "raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame";[1] but it is only the basest writer who cannot speak of the sea without talking of "raging waves," "remorseless floods," "ravenous billows," etc.; and it is one of the signs of the highest power in a writer to check all such habits of thought, and to keep his eyes fixed firmly on the *pure fact*, out of which if any feeling comes to him or his reader, he knows it must be a true one.

To keep to the waves, I forget who it is who represents a man in despair desiring that his body may be cast into the sea,

> "*Whose changing mound, and foam that passed away,*
> Might mock the eyes that questioned where I lay."[2]

Observe, there is not here a single false, or even overcharged, expression. "Mound" of the sea wave is perfectly simple and true; "changing" is as familiar as may be; "foam that passed away," strictly literal; and the whole line descriptive of the reality with a degree of accuracy which I know not any other verse, in the range of poetry, that altogether equals. For most people have not a distinct idea of the clumsiness and massiveness of a large wave. The word "wave" is used too generally of ripples and breakers, and bendings in light drapery or grass: it does not by itself convey a perfect image. But the word "mound" is heavy, large, dark, definite; there is no mistaking the kind of wave meant, nor missing the sight of it. Then the term "changing" has a peculiar force also. Most people think of waves as rising and falling. But if they look at the sea carefully, they will perceive that the waves do not rise and fall. They change. Change both place and form,

[1] [Jude 13.]
[2] [The editors have not been able to discover the authorship of these lines]

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but they do not fall; one wave goes on, and on, and still on; now lower, now higher, now tossing its mane like a horse, now building itself together like a wall, now shaking, now steady, but still the same wave, till at last it seems struck by something, and changes, one knows not how,—becomes another wave.

The close of the line insists on this image, and paints it still more perfectly,—"foam that passed away." Not merely melting, disappearing, but passing on, out of sight, on the career of the wave. Then, having put the absolute ocean fact as far as he may before our eyes, the poet leaves us to feel about it as we may, and to trace for ourselves the opposite fact,—the image of the green mounds that do not change, and the white and written stones that do not pass away; and thence to follow out also the associated images of the calm life with the quiet grave, and the despairing life with the fading foam—

"Let no man move his bones."

"As for Samaria, her king is cut off like the foam upon the water."[1]

But nothing of this is actually told or pointed out, and the expressions, as they stand, are perfectly severe and accurate, utterly uninfluenced by the firmly governed emotion of the writer. Even the word "mock" is hardly an exception, as it may stand merely for "deceive" or "defeat," without implying any impersonation of the waves.

§ 12. It may be well, perhaps, to give one or two more instances to show the peculiar dignity possessed by all passages, which thus limit their expression to the pure fact, and leave the hearer to gather what he can from it. Here is a notable one from the *Iliad*. Helen, looking from the Scæan gate of Troy over the Grecian host, and telling Priam the names of its captains, says at last:—

"I see all the other dark-eyed Greeks; but two I cannot see,—Castor and Pollux,—whom one mother bore with me. Have they not followed from

[1] [2 Kings xxiii. 18; Hosea x. 7.]

fair Lacedæmon, or have they indeed come in their sea-wandering ships, but now will not enter into the battle of men, fearing the shame and the scorn that is in Me?"

Then Homer:—

"So she spoke. But them, already, the life-giving earth possessed, there in Lacedæmon, in the dear fatherland."[1]

Note, here, the high poetical truth carried to the extreme. The poet has to speak of the earth in sadness, but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thoughts of it. No; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving. These are the facts of the thing. I see nothing else than these. Make what you will of them.

§ 13. Take another very notable instance from Casimir de la Vigne's[2] terrible ballad, "La Toilette de Constance." I must quote a few lines out of it here and there, to enable the reader who has not the book by him, to understand its close.

"Vite, Anna! vite; au miroir!
Plus vite, Anna. L'heure s'avance,
Et je vais au bal ce soir
Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

Y pensez-vous? ils sont fanés, ces nœuds;
Ils sont d'hier; mon Dieu, comme tout passe!

[1] [*Iliad*, iii. 243. In the MS. Ruskin notes, "the insurpassably tender irony in the epithet—'life-giving earth'—of the grave"; and then adds another illustration:—

"Compare the hammer-stroke at the close of the [32nd] chapter of *Vanity Fair*—'The darkness came down on the field and city, and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.' A great deal might have been said about it. The writer is very sorry for Amelia, neither does he want faith in prayer. He knows as well as any of us that prayer must be answered in some sort; but those are the facts. The man and woman sixteen miles apart—one on her knees on the floor, the other on his face in the clay. So much love in her heart, so much lead in his. Make what you can of it."

For a different view of this passage, at a later period, see *The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*. Matthew Arnold, in criticising (in the first of his lectures *On Translating Homer*) the passage in the text, isolates it from the context, terminating his citation with the words, "is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving"; he thus makes Ruskin attribute to Homer more "sentimentality" than is in fact suggested: see below, p. 222.]

[2] [The poem is from the *Œuvres Posthumes—Derniers Chants: Poëmes et Ballades sur l'Italie* (1855) of Casimir Delavigne (1793–1843): see again below, p. 224. The second refrain (omitted in previous editions) is here supplied. After the second stanza, three refrains and stanzas are omitted.]

Que du réseau qui retient mes cheveux
Les glands d'azur retombent avec grâce.
Plus haut! Plus bas! Vous ne comprenez rien!
Que sur mon front ce saphir étincelle:
Vous me piquez, maladroite. Ah, c'est bien,
Bien,—chère Anna! Je t'aime, je suis belle.

Vite, j'en crois mon miroir,
Et mon cœur bat d'espérance.
Vite, Anna, je vais ce soir
Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

Celui qu'en vain je voudrais oublier . . .
(Anna, ma robe) il y sera, j'espère.
(Ah, fi! profane, est-ce là mon collier?
Quoi! ces grains d'or bénits par le Saint-Père!)
Il y sera; Dieu, s'il pressait ma main,
En y pensant à peine je respire:
Frère Anselmo doit m'entendre demain,
Comment ferai-je, Anna, pour tout lui dire? . . . .

Vite! un coup d'œil au miroir,
Le dernier.—J'ai l'assurance
Qu'on va m'adorer ce soir
Chez l'ambassadeur de France."

Près du foyer, Constance s'admirait.
Dieu! sur sa robe il vole une étincelle!
Au feu! Courez! Quand l'espoir l'enivrait
Tout perdre ainsi! Quoi! Mourir,—et si belle!
L'horrible feu ronge avec volupté
Ses bras, son sein, et l'entoure, et s'élève,
Et sans pitié dévore sa beauté,
Ses dix-huit ans, hélas, et son doux rêve!

Adieu, bal, plaisir, amour!
On se dit, Pauvre Constance!
Et l'on dansa, jusqu'au jour,
Chez l'ambassadeur de France."

Yes, that is the fact of it. Right or wrong, the poet does not say. What you may think about it, he does not know. He has nothing to do with that. There lie the ashes of the dead girl in her chamber. There they danced, till the morning, at the Ambassador's of France. Make what you will of it.

If the reader will look through the ballad, of which I

have quoted only about the third part, he will find that there is not, from beginning to end of it, a single poetical (so called) expression, except in one stanza. The girl speaks as simple prose as may be; there is not a word she would not have actually used as she was dressing. The poet stands by, impassive as a statue, recording her words just as they come. At last the doom seizes her, and in the very presence of death, for an instant, his own emotions conquer him. He records no longer the facts only, but the facts as they seem to him. The fire gnaws *with voluptuousness—without pity.* It is soon past. The fate is fixed for ever; and he retires into his pale and crystalline atmosphere of truth. He closes all with the calm veracity,

"They said, 'Poor Constance!'"

§ 14. Now in this there is the exact type of the consummate poetical temperament. For, be it clearly and constantly remembered, that the greatness of a poet depends upon the two faculties, acuteness of feeling, and command of it. A poet is great, first in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then, that strength being granted, in proportion to his government of it; there being, however, always a point beyond which it would be inhuman and monstrous if he pushed this government, and, therefore, a point at which all feverish and wild fancy becomes just and true. Thus the destruction of the kingdom of Assyria cannot be contemplated firmly by a prophet of Israel. The fact is too great, too wonderful. It overthrows him, dashes him into a confused element of dreams. All the world is, to his stunned thought, full of strange voices. "Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, 'Since thou art gone down to the grave, no feller is come up against us.'"[1] So, still more, the thought of the presence of Deity cannot be borne without this great astonishment.

[1] [Isaiah xiv. 8. The passage is commented on again in *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 79 (Vol. XII. p. 105).]

"The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."[1]

§ 15. But by how much this feeling is noble when it is justified by the strength of its cause, by so much it is ignoble when there is not cause enough for it; and beyond all other ignobleness is the mere affectation of it, in hardness of heart. Simply bad writing may almost always, as above noticed, be known by its adoption of these fanciful metaphorical expressions as a sort of current coin; yet there is even a worse, at least a more harmful condition of writing than this, in which such expressions are not ignorantly and feelinglessly caught up, but, by some master, skilful in handling, yet insincere, deliberately wrought out with chill and studied fancy; as if we should try to make an old lava-stream look red hot again, by covering it with dead leaves, or white-hot, with hoar-frost.

When Young is lost in veneration, as he dwells on the character of a truly good and holy man, he permits himself for a moment to be overborne by the feeling so far as to exclaim—

> "Where shall I find him? angels, tell me where.
> You know him; he is near you; point him out.
> Shall I see glories beaming from his brow,
> Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?"[2]

This emotion has a worthy cause, and is thus true and right. But now hear the cold-hearted[3] Pope say to a shepherd girl—

> "Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
> Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade;[4]
> Your praise the birds shall chant in every grove,
> And winds shall waft it to the powers above.

[1] [Isaiah lv. 12.]
[2] [*Night Thoughts*, ii. 345.]
[3] ["Cold-hearted" only in writing the *Pastorals:* see the qualification in *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. v. § 5 *n.*]
[4] [See a reference to this line in *Præterita*, i. ch. viii. § 172.]

But would you sing, and rival Orpheus' strain,
The wondering forests soon should dance again;
The moving mountains hear the powerful call,
And headlong streams hang, listening, in their fall." [1]

This is not, nor could it for a moment be mistaken for, the language of passion. It is simple falsehood, uttered by hypocrisy; definite absurdity, rooted in affectation, and coldly asserted in the teeth of nature and fact. Passion will indeed go far in deceiving itself; but it must be a strong passion, not the simple wish of a lover to tempt his mistress to sing. Compare a very closely parallel passage in Wordsworth, in which the lover has lost his mistress:

"Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid,
When thus his moan he made:—

'Oh, move, thou cottage, from behind yon oak,
Or let the ancient tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky.
If still behind yon pine-tree's ragged bough,
Headlong, the waterfall must come,
Oh, let it, then, be dumb—
Be anything, sweet stream, but that which thou art now.'" [2]

Here is a cottage to be moved, if not a mountain, and a waterfall to be silent, if it is not to hang listening: but with what different relation to the mind that contemplates them! Here, in the extremity of its agony, the soul cries out wildly for relief, which at the same moment it partly knows to be impossible, but partly believes possible, in a vague impression that a miracle *might* be wrought to give relief even to a less sore distress,—that nature is kind, and God is kind, and that grief is strong: it knows not well what *is* possible to such grief. To silence a stream, to move a cottage wall,—one might think it could do as much as that!

[1] [*Pastorals:* "Summer, or Alexis." Four lines are omitted after the second in Ruskin's quotation.]

[2] [The piece beginning "'Tis said, That some have died for love." Ruskin, as was his custom, quotes from memory. He runs together two stanzas, and several words are different in the poet's text.]

I believe these instances are enough to illustrate the main point I insist upon respecting the pathetic fallacy,—that so far as it *is* a fallacy, it is always the sign of a morbid state of mind, and comparatively of a weak one. Even in the most inspired prophet it is a sign of the incapacity of his human sight or thought to bear what has been revealed to it. In ordinary poetry, if it is found in the thoughts of the poet himself, it is at once a sign of his belonging to the inferior school; if in the thoughts of the characters imagined by him, it is right or wrong according to the genuineness of the emotion from which it springs; always, however, implying necessarily *some* degree of weakness in the character.

Take two most exquisite instances from master hands. The Jessy of Shenstone, and the Ellen of Wordsworth, have both been betrayed and deserted. Jessy, in the course of her most touching complaint, says:

> "If through the garden's flowery tribes I stray,
> Where bloom the jasmines that could once allure,
> 'Hope not to find delight in us,' they say,
> 'For we are spotless, Jessy; we are pure.'" [1]

Compare this with some of the words of Ellen:

> "'Ah, why,' said Ellen, sighing to herself,
> 'Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge,
> And nature, that is kind in woman's breast,
> And reason, that in man is wise and good,
> And fear of Him Who is a righteous Judge,—
> Why do not these prevail for human life,
> To keep two hearts together, that began
> Their springtime with one love, and that have need
> Of mutual pity and forgiveness sweet
> To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
> O, come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
> Been faithless, hear him;—though a lowly creature,
> One of God's simple children that yet know not
> The Universal Parent, *how* he sings!
> As if he wished the firmament of heaven

[1] [Ruskin quotes these lines again in his description of Holman Hunt's picture "The Awakening Conscience": see Vol. XII. p. 335.]

Should listen, and give back to him the voice
Of his triumphant constancy and love;
The proclamation that he makes, how far
His darkness doth transcend our fickle light.'" [1]

The perfection of both these passages, as far as regards truth and tenderness of imagination in the two poets, is quite insuperable. But of the two characters imagined, Jessy is weaker than Ellen, exactly in so far as something appears to her to be in nature which is not. The flowers do not really reproach her. God meant them to comfort her, not to taunt her; they would do so if she saw them rightly.

Ellen, on the other hand, is quite above the slightest erring emotion. There is not the barest film of fallacy in all her thoughts. She reasons as calmly as if she did not feel. And, although the singing of the bird suggests to her the idea of its desiring to be heard in heaven, she does not for an instant admit any veracity in the thought. "As if," she says,—"I know he means nothing of the kind; but it does verily seem as if." The reader will find, by examining the rest of the poem, that Ellen's character is throughout consistent in this clear though passionate strength.*

* I cannot quit this subject without giving two more instances, both exquisite, of the pathetic fallacy, which I have just come upon, in *Maud*: [2]—

"For a great speculation had fail'd;
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair;
And out he walk'd, when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the *flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.*"

"There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near!'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late.'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear!'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'"

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[1] [*The Excursion*, book vi. (p. 494 of J. Morley's edition).]

[2] [The passages are from Part i., i. 3, and Part i., xxii. 10. A letter from Ruskin to Tennyson in appreciation of *Maud* (November 12, 1855) is given in a later volume of this edition. Ruskin referred incidentally to another "pathetic fallacy" in the poem in *Sesame and Lilies*, §§ 93–94; see the note there for the poet's reply to the criticism.]

It then being, I hope, now made clear to the reader in all respects that the pathetic fallacy is powerful only so far as it is pathetic, feeble so far as it is fallacious, and, therefore, that the dominion of Truth is entire, over this, as over every other natural and just state of the human mind, we may go on to the subject for the dealing with which this prefatory inquiry became necessary; and why necessary, we shall see forthwith.

CHAPTER XIII

OF CLASSICAL LANDSCAPE

§ 1. My reason for asking the reader to give so much of his time to the examination of the pathetic fallacy was, that, whether in literature or in art, he will find it eminently characteristic of the modern mind; and in the landscape, whether of literature or art, he will also find the modern painter endeavouring to express something which he, as a living creature, imagines in the lifeless object, while the classical and mediæval painters were content with expressing the unimaginary and actual qualities of the object itself. It will be observed that, according to the principle stated long ago, I use the words painter and poet quite indifferently, including in our inquiry the landscape of literature, as well as that of painting; and this the more because the spirit of classical landscape has hardly been expressed in any other way than by words.

§ 2. Taking, therefore, this wide field, it is surely a very notable circumstance, to begin with, that this pathetic fallacy is eminently characteristic of modern painting. For instance, Keats, describing a wave breaking out at sea, says of it—

> "Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,
> Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence."[1]

That is quite perfect, as an example of the modern manner. The idea of the peculiar action with which foam rolls down a long, large wave could not have been given by any other words so well as by this "wayward indolence." But Homer would never have written, never thought of,

[1] [*Endymion*, book ii. 350.]

such words. He could not by any possibility have lost sight of the great fact that the wave, from the beginning to the end of it, do what it might, was still nothing else than salt water; and that salt water could not be either wayward or indolent. He will call the waves "over-roofed," "full-charged," "monstrous," "compact-black," "dark-clear," "violet-coloured," "wine-coloured," and so on.[1] But every one of these epithets is descriptive of pure physical nature. "Over-roofed" is the term he invariably uses of anything —rock, house, or wave—that nods over at the brow; the other terms need no explanation; they are as accurate and intense in truth as words can be, but they never show the slightest feeling of anything animated in the ocean. Black or clear, monstrous or violet-coloured, cold salt water it is always, and nothing but that.

§ 3. "Well, but the modern writer, by his admission of the tinge of fallacy, has given an idea of something in the action of the wave which Homer could not, and surely, therefore, has made a step in advance? Also there appears to be a degree of sympathy and feeling in the one writer, which there is not in the other; and as it has been received for a first principle that writers are great in proportion to the intensity of their feelings, and Homer seems to have no feelings about the sea but that it is black and deep, surely in this respect also the modern writer is the greater?"

Stay a moment. Homer *had* some feeling about the sea; a faith in the animation of it much stronger than Keats's. But all this sense of something living in it, he separates in his mind into a great abstract image of a Sea Power. He never says the waves rage, or the waves

[1] ["Over-roofed," καταρεφής (*Od.* v. 367); "full-charged," τροφόεις (*Il.* xi. 307; xv. 621); "monstrous," πελώριος (*Od.* iii. 290); "violet-coloured," ἰοειδής (*Il.* xi. 298); "wine-coloured," οἴνοψ (*Il.* ii. 613). It is not clear to what epithets Ruskin alluded in "compact-black," "dark-clear." In one of his diaries, he jots down the epithet πηγός (compact) (*Od.* v. 388); with regard to which word as applied to waves, Liddell and Scott note that old interpreters translate it either as "black" or as "white"; Ruskin puts against it in his diary, "icy clear black," with a note of exclamation —on the uncertainty of its meaning. It seems not improbable that an "or" should be inserted between "compact-black" and "dark-clear," both expressions referring to the uncertain πηγός.]

are idle. But he says there is somewhat in, and greater than, the waves, which rages, and is idle, and *that* he calls a god.

§ 4. I do not think we ever enough endeavour to enter into what a Greek's real notion of a god was. We are so accustomed to the modern mockeries of the classical religion, so accustomed to hear and see the Greek gods introduced as living personages, or invoked for help, by men who believe neither in them nor in any other gods, that we seem to have infected the Greek ages themselves with the breath, and dimmed them with the shade, of our hypocrisy; and are apt to think that Homer, as we know that Pope, was merely an ingenious fabulist; nay, more than this, that all the nations of past time were ingenious fabulists also, to whom the universe was a lyrical drama, and by whom whatsoever was said about it was merely a witty allegory, or a graceful lie, of which the entire upshot and consummation was a pretty statue in the middle of the court, or at the end of the garden.

This, at least, is one of our forms of opinion about Greek faith; not, indeed, possible altogether to any man of honesty or ordinary powers of thought; but still so venomously inherent in the modern philosophy that all the pure lightning of Carlyle[1] cannot as yet quite burn it out of any of us. And then, side by side with this mere infidel folly, stands the bitter short-sightedness of Puritanism, holding the classical god to be either simply an idol,—a block of stone ignorantly, though sincerely, worshipped—or else an actual diabolic or betraying power, usurping the place of God.

§ 5. Both these Puritanical estimates of Greek deity are of course to some extent true. The corruption of classical worship is barren idolatry; and that corruption was deepened, and variously directed to their own purposes, by the evil angels. But this was neither the whole, nor the principal part, of Pagan worship. Pallas was not, in the pure Greek

[1] [See the essay entitled "Biography" in the fourth volume of Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, p. 56 in the "Popular Edition" of 1872.]

mind, merely a powerful piece of ivory in a temple at Athens; neither was the choice of Leonidas between the alternatives granted him by the oracle, of personal death, or ruin to his country,[1] altogether a work of the Devil's prompting.

§ 6. What, then, was actually the Greek god? In what way were these two ideas of human form, and divine power, credibly associated in the ancient heart, so as to become a subject of true faith irrespective equally of fable, allegory, superstitious trust in stone, and demoniacal influence?

It seems to me that the Greek had exactly the same instinctive feeling about the elements that we have ourselves; that to Homer, as much as to Casimir de la Vigne, fire seemed ravenous and pitiless; to Homer, as much as to Keats, the sea-wave appeared wayward or idle, or whatever else it may be to the poetical passion. But then the Greek reasoned upon this sensation, saying to himself: "I can light the fire, and put it out; I can dry this water up, or drink it. It cannot be the fire or the water that rages, or that is wayward. But it must be something *in* this fire and *in* the water, which I cannot destroy by extinguishing the one, or evaporating the other, any more than I destroy myself by cutting off my finger; *I* was *in* my finger,—something of me at least was; I had a power over it and felt pain in it, though I am still as much myself when it is gone. So there may be a power in the water which is not water, but to which the water is as a body;—which can strike with it, move in it, suffer in it, yet not be destroyed with it. This something, this Great Water Spirit, I must not confuse with the waves, which are only its body. *They* may flow hither and thither, increase or diminish. *That* must be indivisible—imperishable—a god. So of fire also; those rays which I can stop, and in the midst of which I cast a shadow, cannot be divine, nor greater

[1] [Herodotus, vii. 220. For other references to Leonidas, see note on Vol. XII. p. 138. The meaning of Pallas in the Greek mind was worked out by Ruskin in *The Queen of the Air*.]

than I. They cannot feel, but there may be something in them that feels,—a glorious intelligence, as much nobler and more swift than mine, as these rays, which are its body, are nobler and swifter than my flesh;—the spirit of all light, and truth, and melody, and revolving hours."

§ 7. It was easy to conceive, farther, that such spirits should be able to assume at will a human form, in order to hold intercourse with men, or to perform any act for which their proper body, whether of fire, earth, or air, was unfitted. And it would have been to place them beneath, instead of above, humanity, if, assuming the form of man, they could not also have tasted his pleasures. Hence the easy step to the more or less material ideas of deities, which are apt at first to shock us, but which are indeed only dishonourable so far as they represent the gods as false and unholy. It is not the materialism, but the vice, which degrades the conception; for the materialism itself is never positive, or complete. There is always some sense of exaltation in the spiritual and immortal body; and of a power proceeding from the visible form through all the infinity of the element ruled by the particular god. The precise nature of the idea is well seen in the passage of the *Iliad* which describes the river Scamander defending the Trojans against Achilles.[1] In order to remonstrate with the hero, the god assumes a human form, which nevertheless is in some way or other instantly recognized by Achilles as that of the river-god: it is addressed at once as a river, not as a man; and its voice is the voice of a river "out of the deep whirlpools."* Achilles refuses to obey its commands; and from the human form it returns instantly into its natural or divine one, and endeavours to overwhelm him with waves. Vulcan defends

* Compare *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto i. stanza 15, and canto v. stanza 2. In the first instance, the river-spirit is accurately the Homeric god, only Homer would have believed in it,—Scott did not: at least not altogether.

[1] [*Iliad*, xxi. 212–360. The river-god in his wrath arises "out of the deep whirlpool" (*βαθέης δ' ἐκφθέγξατο δίνης*, 213); Achilles addresses him as the Scamander (223). Hephæstus sends fire against the river (349). The "strength," or "nerve of the river" (*ἰς ποταμοῖο*) feels the fire (356), and begs for respite (357–360).]

Achilles, and sends fire against the river, which suffers in its water-body, till it is able to bear no more. At last even the "nerve of the river," or "strength of the river" (note the expression), feels the fire, and this "strength of the river" addresses Vulcan in supplications for respite. There is in this precisely the idea of a vital part of the river-body, which acted and felt, to which, if the fire reached, it was death, just as would be the case if it touched a vital part of the human body. Throughout the passage the manner of conception is perfectly clear and consistent; and if, in other places, the exact connection between the ruling spirit and the thing ruled is not so manifest, it is only because it is almost impossible for the human mind to dwell long upon such subjects without falling into inconsistencies, and gradually slackening its effort to grasp the entire truth; until the more spiritual part of it slips from its hold, and only the human form of the god is left, to be conceived and described as subject to all the errors of humanity. But I do not believe that the idea ever weakens itself down to mere allegory. When Pallas is said to attack and strike down Mars, it does not mean merely that Wisdom at that moment prevailed against Wrath. It means that there are, indeed, two great spirits, one entrusted to guide the human soul to wisdom and chastity, the other to kindle wrath and prompt to battle. It means that these two spirits, on the spot where, and at the moment when, a great contest was to be decided between all that they each governed in man, then and there (assumed) human form, and human weapons, and did verily and materially strike at each other, until the Spirit of Wrath was crushed. And when Diana is said to hunt with her nymphs in the woods, it does not mean merely, as Wordsworth puts it,[1] that the poet or shepherd saw the moon and stars glancing between the branches of the trees, and wished to say so figuratively. It means that there is a living spirit, to which the light of the moon is a body; which takes delight in glancing between the clouds and

[1] [The reference is to the *Excursion,* book iv. lines 847–887.]

following the wild beasts as they wander through the night; and that this spirit sometimes assumes a perfect human form, and in this form, with real arrows, pursues and slays the wild beasts, which with its mere arrows of moonlight it could not slay; retaining, nevertheless, all the while, its power and being in the moonlight, and in all else that it rules.

§ 8. There is not the smallest inconsistency or unspirituality in this conception. If there were, it would attach equally to the appearance of the angels to Jacob, Abraham, Joshua, or Manoah.[1] In all those instances the highest authority which governs our own faith requires us to conceive divine power clothed with a human form (a form so real that it is recognized for superhuman only by its "doing wondrously"), and retaining, nevertheless, sovereignty and omnipresence in all the world. This is precisely, as I understand it, the heathen idea of a God; and it is impossible to comprehend any single part of the Greek mind until we grasp this faithfully, not endeavouring to explain it away in any wise, but accepting, with frank decision and definition, the tangible existence of its deities;—blue-eyed—white-fleshed—human-hearted,—capable at their choice of meeting man absolutely in his own nature—feasting with him—talking with him—fighting with him, eye to eye, or breast to breast, as Mars with Diomed;[2] or else, dealing with him in a more retired spirituality, as Apollo sending the plague upon the Greeks, when his quiver rattles at his shoulders as he moves, and yet the darts sent forth of it strike not as arrows, but as plague; or, finally, retiring completely into the material universe which they properly inhabit, and dealing with man through that, as Scamander with Achilles, through his waves.

§ 9. Nor is there anything whatever in the various actions recorded of the gods, however apparently ignoble, to indicate weakness of belief in them. Very frequently

[1] [Genesis xxxii. 1, xxii. 11; Joshua v. 13; Judges xiii. 19 ("and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on").]

[2] [*Iliad*, v. 846; the next reference is *Iliad*, i. 43.]

things which appear to us ignoble are merely the simplicities of a pure and truthful age. When Juno beats Diana about the ears with her own quiver,[1] for instance, we start at first, as if Homer could not have believed that they were both real goddesses. But what should Juno have done? Killed Diana with a look? Nay, she neither wished to do so, nor could she have done so, by the very faith of Diana's goddess-ship. Diana is as immortal as herself. Frowned Diana into submission? But Diana has come expressly to try conclusions with her, and will by no means be frowned into submission. Wounded her with a celestial lance? That sounds more poetical, but it is in reality partly more savage and partly more absurd, than Homer. More savage, for it makes Juno more cruel, therefore less divine; and more absurd, for it only seems elevated in tone, because we use the word "celestial," which means nothing. What sort of a thing is a "celestial" lance? Not a wooden one. Of what then? Of moonbeams, or clouds, or mist. Well, therefore, Diana's arrows were of mist too; and her quiver, and herself, and Juno, with her lance, and all, vanish into mist. Why not have said at once, if that is all you mean, that two mists met, and one drove the other back? That would have been rational and intelligible, but not to talk of celestial lances. Homer had no such misty fancy; he believed the two goddesses were there in true bodies, with true weapons, on the true earth; and still I ask, what should Juno have done? Not beaten Diana? No; for it is unlady-like. Un-English-lady-like, yes; but by no means un-Greek-lady-like, nor even un-natural-lady-like. If a modern lady does *not* beat her servant or her rival about the ears, it is oftener because she is too weak, or too proud, than because she is of purer mind than Homer's Juno. She will not strike them; but she will overwork the one or slander the other without pity; and Homer would not have thought that one whit more goddess-like than striking them with her open hand.

[1] [*Iliad*, xxi. 489.]

§ 10. If, however, the reader likes to suppose that while the two goddesses in personal presence thus fought with arrow and quiver, there was also a broader and vaster contest supposed by Homer between the elements they ruled; and that the goddess of the heavens, as she struck the goddess of the moon on the flushing cheek, was at the same instant exercising omnipresent power in the heavens themselves, and gathering clouds, with which, filled with the moon's own arrows or beams, she was encumbering and concealing the moon; he is welcome to this outcarrying of the idea, provided that he does not pretend to make it an interpretation instead of a mere extension, nor think to explain away my real, running, beautiful beaten Diana, into a moon behind clouds.*

§ 11. It is only farther to be noted, that the Greek conception of Godhead, as it was much more real than we usually suppose, so it was much more bold and familiar than to a modern mind would be possible. I shall have something more to observe,[1] in a little while, of the danger of our modern habit of endeavouring to raise ourselves to something like comprehension of the truth of divinity, instead of simply believing the words in which the Deity reveals Himself to us. The Greek erred rather on the other side, making hardly any effort to conceive divine mind as above the human; and no more shrinking from frank intercourse with a divine being, or dreading its immediate presence, than that of the simplest of mortals. Thus Atrides, enraged at his sword's breaking in his hand upon the helmet of Paris, after he had expressly invoked the assistance

* Compare the exquisite lines of Longfellow on the sunset in *The Golden Legend*:—

> "The day is done, and slowly from the scene
> The stooping sun upgathers his spent shafts,
> And puts them back into his golden quiver."[2]

[1] [See in the next volume, ch. vi. §§ 6, 7, pp. 109–110.]

[2] [The lines occur in Part I., "The Castle of Vautsberg on the Rhine." *The Golden Legend* was a favourite poem with Ruskin; see his quotations from it in the "Lectures on Colour" in Vol. XII. p. 485, and the reference in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. § 32.]

of Jupiter, exclaims aloud as he would to a king who had betrayed him, "Jove, Father, there is not another god more evil-minded than thou!"[1] and Helen, provoked at Paris's defeat, and oppressed with pouting shame both for him and for herself, when Venus appears at her side, and would lead her back to the delivered Paris, impatiently tells the goddess to "go and take care of Paris herself."

§ 12. The modern mind is naturally, but vulgarly and unjustly, shocked by this kind of familiarity. Rightly understood, it is not so much a sign of misunderstanding of the divine nature as of good understanding of the human. The Greek lived, in all things, a healthy, and, in a certain degree, a perfect, life. He had no morbid or sickly feeling of any kind. He was accustomed to face death without the slightest shrinking, to undergo all kinds of bodily hardship without complaint, and to do what he supposed right and honourable, in most cases, as a matter of course. Confident of his own immortality, and of the power of abstract justice, he expected to be dealt with in the next world as was right, and left the matter much in his god's hands; but being thus immortal, and finding in his own soul something which it seemed quite as difficult to master, as to rule the elements, he did not feel that it was an appalling superiority in those gods to have bodies of water, or fire, instead of flesh, and to have various work to do among the clouds and waves, out of his human way; or sometimes, even in a sort of service to himself. Was not the nourishment of herbs and flowers a kind of ministering to his wants; were not the gods in some sort his husbandmen, and spirit-servants? Their mere strength or omnipresence did not seem to him a distinction absolutely terrific. It might be the nature of one being to be in two places at once, and of another to be only in one; but that did not seem of itself to infer any absolute lordliness of one nature above the other, any more than an insect must be a nobler creature than a man,

[1] [*Iliad*, iii. 365; the next reference is *Iliad*, iii. 406.]

because it can see on four sides of its head, and the man only in front. They could kill him or torture him, it was true; but even that not unjustly, or not for ever. There was a fate, and a Divine Justice, greater than they; so that if they did wrong, and he right, he might fight it out with them, and have the better of them at last. In a general way, they were wiser, stronger, and better than he; and to ask counsel of them, to obey them, to sacrifice to them, to thank them for all good, this was well: but to be utterly downcast before them, or not to tell them his mind in plain Greek if they seemed to him to be conducting themselves in an ungodly manner—this would not be well.

§ 13. Such being their general idea of the gods, we can now easily understand the habitual tone of their feelings towards what was beautiful in nature. With us, observe, the idea of the Divinity is apt to get separated from the life of nature; and imagining our God upon a cloudy throne, far above the earth, and not in the flowers or waters, we approach those visible things with a theory that they are dead; governed by physical laws, and so forth. But coming to them, we find the theory fail; that they are not dead; that, say what we choose about them, the instinctive sense of their being alive is too strong for us; and in scorn of all physical law, the wilful fountain sings, and the kindly flowers rejoice. And then, puzzled, and yet happy; pleased, and yet ashamed of being so; accepting sympathy from nature, which we do not believe it gives, and giving sympathy to nature, which we do not believe it receives,—mixing, besides, all manner of purposeful play and conceit with these involuntary fellowships,—we fall necessarily into the curious web of hesitating sentiment, pathetic fallacy, and wandering fancy, which form a great part of our modern view of nature. But the Greek never removed his god out of nature at all; never attempted for a moment to contradict his instinctive sense that God was everywhere. "The tree *is* glad," said he, "I know it is; I can cut it down: no matter, there was a nymph in it. The water *does* sing,"

said he; "I can dry it up; but no matter, there was a naiad in it." But in thus clearly defining his belief, observe, he threw it entirely into a human form, and gave his faith to nothing but the image of his own humanity. What sympathy and fellowship he had, were always for the spirit *in* the stream, not for the stream; always for the dryad *in* the wood, not for the wood. Content with this human sympathy, he approached the actual waves and woody fibres with no sympathy at all. The spirit that ruled them, he received as a plain fact. Them, also, ruled and material, he received as plain facts; they, without their spirit, were dead enough. A rose was good for scent, and a stream for sound and coolness; for the rest, one was no more than leaves, the other no more than water; he could not make anything else of them; and the divine power, which was involved in their existence, having been all distilled away by him into an independent Flora or Thetis, the poor leaves or waves were left, in mere cold corporealness, to make the most of their being discernibly red and soft, clear and wet, and unacknowledged in any other power whatsoever.

§ 14. Then, observe farther, the Greeks lived in the midst of the most beautiful nature, and were as familiar with blue sea, clear air, and sweet outlines of mountain, as we are with brick walls, black smoke, and level fields. This perfect familiarity rendered all such scenes of natural beauty unexciting, if not indifferent to them, by lulling and overwearying the imagination as far as it was concerned with such things; but there was another kind of beauty which they found it required effort to obtain, and which, when thoroughly obtained, seemed more glorious than any of this wild loveliness—the beauty of the human countenance and form. This, they perceived, could only be reached by continual exercise of virtue; and it was in Heaven's sight, and theirs, all the more beautiful because it needed this self-denial to obtain it. So they set themselves to reach this, and having gained it, gave it their principal thoughts, and set it off with beautiful dress as best they might. But

making this their object, they were obliged to pass their lives in simple exercise and disciplined employments. Living wholesomely, giving themselves no fever fits, either by fasting or over-eating, constantly in the open air, and full of animal spirit and physical power, they became incapable of every morbid condition of mental emotion. Unhappy love, disappointed ambition, spiritual despondency, or any other disturbing sensation, had little power over the well-braced nerves, and healthy flow of the blood; and what bitterness might yet fasten on them was soon boxed or raced out of a boy, and spun or woven out of a girl, or danced out of both. They had indeed their sorrows, true and deep, but still, more like children's sorrows than ours, whether bursting into open cry of pain, or hid with shuddering under the veil, still passing over the soul as clouds do over heaven, not sullying it, not mingling with it;—darkening it perhaps long or utterly, but still not becoming one with it, and for the most part passing away in dashing rain of tears, and leaving the man unchanged: in nowise affecting, as our sorrow does, the whole tone of his thought and imagination thenceforward.

How far our melancholy may be deeper and wider than theirs in its roots and view, and therefore nobler, we shall consider presently;[1] but at all events, they had the advantage of us in being entirely free from all those dim and feverish sensations which result from unhealthy state of the body. I believe that a large amount of the dreamy and sentimental sadness, tendency to reverie, and general patheticalness of modern life results merely from derangement of stomach; holding to the Greek life the same relation that the feverish night of an adult does to a child's sleep.

§ 15. Farther, the human beauty, which, whether in its bodily being or in imagined divinity, had become, for the reasons we have seen, the principal object of culture and sympathy to these Greeks, was, in its perfection, eminently orderly, symmetrical, and tender. Hence, contemplating it

[1] [See below, p. 352, and ch. xvii.]

constantly in this state, they could not but feel a proportionate fear of all that was disorderly, unbalanced, and rugged. Having trained their stoutest soldiers into a strength so delicate and lovely, that their white flesh, with their blood upon it, should look like ivory stained with purple;* and having always around them, in the motion and majesty of this beauty, enough for the full employment of their imagination, they shrank with dread or hatred from all the ruggedness of lower nature, — from the wrinkled forest bark, the jagged hill-crest, and irregular, inorganic storm of sky; looking to these for the most part as adverse powers, and taking pleasure only in such portions of the lower world as were at once conducive to the rest and health of the human frame, and in harmony with the laws of its gentler beauty.

§ 16. Thus, as far as I recollect, without a single exception, every Homeric landscape, intended to be beautiful, is composed of a fountain, a meadow, and a shady grove. This ideal is very interestingly marked, as intended for a perfect one, in the fifth book of the *Odyssey;* when Mercury himself stops for a moment, though on a message, to look at a landscape "which even an immortal might be gladdened to behold."[1] This landscape consists of a cave covered with a running vine, all blooming into grapes, and surrounded by a grove of alder, poplar, and sweet-smelling cypress. Four fountains of white (foaming) water, springing *in succession* (mark the orderliness), and close to one another, flow away in different directions, through a meadow full of violets and parsley (parsley, to mark its moisture, being elsewhere called "marsh-nourished," and associated with the lotus†); the air is perfumed not only by these violets, and by the sweet cypress, but by Calypso's fire of finely chopped cedar-wood, which sends a smoke, as of incense, through the island; Calypso herself is singing; and finally, upon the trees are

* *Iliad,* iv. 141.
† *Iliad,* ii. 776.

[1] [*Odyssey,* v. 58–74.]

resting, or roosting, owls, hawks, and "long-tongued sea-crows." Whether these last are considered as a part of the ideal landscape, as marine singing birds, I know not; but the approval of Mercury appears to be elicited chiefly by the fountains and violet meadow.

§ 17. Now the notable things in this description are, first, the evident subservience of the whole landscape to human comfort, to the foot, the taste, or the smell; and, secondly, that throughout the passage there is not a single figurative word expressive of the things being in any wise other than plain glass, fruit, or flower. I have used the term "spring" of the fountains, because, without doubt, Homer means that they sprang forth brightly, having their source at the foot of the rocks (as copious fountains nearly always have); but Homer does not say "spring," he says simply flow, and uses only one word for "growing softly," or "richly," of the tall trees, the vine, and the violets.[1] There is, however, some expression of sympathy with the sea-birds; he speaks of them in precisely the same terms, as in other places of naval nations, saying they "have care of the works of the sea."[2]

§ 18. If we glance through the references to pleasant landscape which occur in other parts of the *Odyssey*, we shall always be struck by this quiet subjection of their every feature to human service, and by the excessive similarity in the scenes. Perhaps the spot intended, after this, to be most perfect, may be the garden of Alcinous, where the principal ideas are, still more definitely, order, symmetry, and fruitfulness;[3] the beds being duly ranged between rows of vines, which, as well as the pear, apple, and fig-trees, bear fruit continually, some grapes being yet sour, while others are getting black; there are plenty of "*orderly* square beds of herbs," chiefly leeks, and two fountains, one running

[1] [τεθῄλει δὲ σταφυλῇσιν·
κρῆναι δ' ἐξείης πίσυρες ῥεόν ὕδατι λευκῷ . . .
ἀμφὶ δὲ λειμῶνες μαλακοὶ ἴου ἠδὲ σελίνου
θήλεον.]

[2] [τῇσίν τε θαλάσσια ἔργα μέμηλεν, *Odyssey* v. 67. The same phrase is used of men in *Iliad*, ii. 614.]

[3] [*Odyssey*, vii. 112–135.]

through the garden, and one under the pavement of the palace, to a reservoir for the citizens. Ulysses, pausing to contemplate this scene, is described nearly in the same terms as Mercury pausing to contemplate the wilder meadow; and it is interesting to observe, that, in spite of all Homer's love of symmetry, the god's admiration is excited by the free fountains, wild violets, and wandering vine; but the mortal's, by the vines in rows, the leeks in beds, and the fountains in pipes.

Ulysses has, however, one touching reason for loving vines in rows. His father had given him fifty rows for himself, when he was a boy, with corn between them (just as it now grows in Italy). Proving his identity afterwards to his father, whom he finds at work in his garden, "with thick gloves on, to keep his hands from the thorns," he reminds him of these fifty rows of vines, and of the "thirteen pear-trees and ten apple-trees" which he had given him: and Laertes faints upon his neck.[1]

§ 19. If Ulysses had not been so much of a gardener, it might have been received as a sign of considerable feeling for landscape beauty, that, intending to pay the very highest possible compliment to the Princess Nausicaa (and having, indeed, the moment before gravely asked her whether she was a goddess or not), he says that he feels, at seeing her, exactly as he did when he saw the young palm-tree growing at Apollo's shrine at Delos.[2] But I think the taste for trim hedges and upright trunks has its usual influence over him here also, and that he merely means to tell the princess that she is delightfully tall and straight.

§ 20. The princess is, however, pleased by his address, and tells him to wait outside the town, till she can speak to her father about him. The spot to which she directs him is another ideal piece of landscape, composed of a "beautiful grove of aspen poplars, a fountain, and a meadow,"[3] near the road-side: in fact, as nearly as possible such a scene as

[1] [*Odyssey*, xxiv. 340.]
[2] [*Odyssey*, vi. 149, 162.]
[3] [*Odyssey*, vi. 292.]

meets the eye of the traveller every instant on the much-despised lines of road through lowland France; for instance, on the railway between Arras and Amiens;—scenes, to my mind, quite exquisite in the various grouping and grace of their innumerable poplar avenues, casting sweet, tremulous shadows over their level meadows and labyrinthine streams.[1] We know that the princess means aspen poplars, because soon afterwards we find her fifty maid-servants at the palace, all spinning and in perpetual motion, compared to the "leaves of the tall poplar;"[2] and it is with exquisite feeling that it is made afterwards * the chief tree in the groves of Proserpine; its light and quivering leafage having exactly the melancholy expression of fragility, faintness, and inconstancy which the ancients attributed to the disembodied spirit.† The likeness to the poplars by the streams of Amiens is more marked still in the *Iliad*, where the young Simois, struck by Ajax, falls to the earth "like an aspen that has grown in an irrigated meadow, smooth-trunked, the soft shoots springing from its top, which some coach-making

* *Odyssey*, x. 510.

† Compare the passage in Dante referred to above, chap. xii. § 6 [p. 206].

[1] [Ruskin had been specially struck by this scenery in 1854, as is shown by the following entry in his diary:—

"Amiens, *May* 11.—Came round to-day by Lille, leaving Calais at 8 in the morning and arriving here at 2. The country for about twenty miles before arriving here is singularly lovely, to my mind; owing to its abundance of trees, tall aspens, ranged in all manner of groups among the fields; long double lines, with little ditches full of reeds between them, single lines, squares, circles—always definite arrangement of some sort, but full-crowded, covering acre after acre of meadowland, every tree lovely beyond expression—the commonest and poorest of them throwing out its branches more perfectly than Turner's best work. I suppose they are grown for firing, for they occupy a vast quantity of the land; it is of course all pasture between them, and they form a kind of park-forest, quite unlike anything in England, or indeed any other country that I have seen—running up with undulating trunks fifty or sixty feet, then branching into light plumy heads; pollard willows, of course, mingled among them, and groups of lower trees, but somehow or other always *groups;* never patches and scattered as with us. I was impressed beyond measure with the beauty of their boughs even the moment I left Calais; not the meanest bush but was a study for its grace and inventive lines, I suppose growing faster than in England. But even allowing for this, it seems a mystery to me. Is it that in trees, as in drawing, the line drawn with the greatest swiftness is the best?"]

[2] [*Odyssey*, vii. 106.]

man has cut down with his keen iron, that he may fit a wheel of it to a fair chariot, and it lies parching by the side of the stream."[1] It is sufficiently notable that Homer, living in mountainous and rocky countries, dwells thus delightedly on all the *flat* bits; and so I think invariably the inhabitants of mountain countries do, but the inhabitants of the plains do not, in any similar way, dwell delightedly on mountains. The Dutch painters are perfectly contented with their flat fields and pollards; Rubens, though he had seen the Alps, usually composes his landscapes of a hayfield or two, plenty of pollards and willows, a distant spire, a Dutch house with a moat about it, a windmill, and a ditch. The Flemish sacred painters are the only ones who introduce mountains in the distance, as we shall see presently;[2] but rather in a formal way than with any appearance of enjoyment. So Shakspere never speaks of mountains with the slightest joy, but only of lowland flowers, flat fields, and Warwickshire streams.[3] And if we talk to the mountaineer, he will usually characterise his own country to us as a "pays affreux," or in some equivalent, perhaps even more violent, German term: but the lowland peasant does not think his country frightful; he either will have no ideas beyond it, or about it; or will think it a very perfect country, and be apt to regard any deviation from its general principle of flatness with extreme disfavour; as the Lincolnshire farmer in *Alton Locke:* "I'll shaw 'ee some'at like a field o' beans, I wool—none o' this here darned ups and downs o' hills, to shake a body's victuals out of his inwards—all so vlat as a barn's vloor, for vorty mile on end—there's the country to live in!"[4]

I do not say whether this be altogether right (though certainly not wholly wrong), but it seems to me that there

[1] [*Iliad*, iv. 482.]

[2] [See in the next volume, ch. xx. § 16.]

[3] [On Shakespeare's love of the meadows, see below, ch. xiv. § 51, p. 289; and compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xx. §§ 27–29, 37, 38.]

[4] [Chapter xii. Some words are omitted after "some'at like" and also after "o' hills."]

must be in the simple freshness and fruitfulness of level land, in its pale upright trees, and gentle lapse of silent streams, enough for the satisfaction of the human mind in general; and I so far agree with Homer, that, if I had to educate an artist to the full perception of the meaning of the word "gracefulness" in landscape, I should send him neither to Italy nor to Greece, but simply to those poplar groves between Arras and Amiens.

§ 21. But to return more definitely to our Homeric landscape. When it is perfect, we have, as in the above instances, the foliage and meadows together; when imperfect, it is always either the foliage or the meadow; pre-eminently the meadow, or arable field. Thus, meadows of asphodel are prepared for the happier dead; and even Orion, a hunter among the mountains in his lifetime, pursues the ghosts of beasts in these asphodel meadows after death.* So the sirens sing in a meadow;[1] and throughout the *Odyssey* there is a general tendency to the depreciation of poor Ithaca, because it is rocky, and only fit for goats, and has "no meadows;"[2] for which reason Telemachus refuses Atrides's present of horses, congratulating the Spartan king at the same time on ruling over a plain which has "plenty of lotus in it, and rushes," with corn and barley. Note this constant dwelling on the marsh plants, or, at least, those which grow in flat and well-irrigated land, or beside streams: when Scamander, for instance, is restrained by Vulcan, Homer says, very sorrowfully, that "all his lotus, and reeds, and rushes were burnt;"[3] and thus Ulysses, after being shipwrecked and nearly drowned, and beaten about the sea for many days and nights, on raft and mast, at last getting ashore at the mouth of a large river, casts himself down first upon its *rushes*, and then, in thankfulness, kisses the

* *Odyssey*, xi. 572, xxiv. 13. The couch of Ceres, with Homer's usual faithfulness, is made of a *ploughed* field, v. 127.

[1] [*Odyssey*, xii. 45.]
[2] [*Odyssey*, iv. 601.]
[3] [*Iliad*, xxi. 351.]

"corn-giving land," as most opposed, in his heart, to the fruitless and devouring sea.*

§ 22. In this same passage, also, we find some peculiar expressions of the delight which the Greeks had in trees; for, when Ulysses first comes in sight of land, which gladdens him "as the reviving of a father from his sickness gladdens his children," it is not merely the sight of the land itself which gives him such pleasure, but of the "land and *wood*."[1] Homer never throws away any words, at least in such a place as this; and what in another poet would have been merely the filling up of the deficient line with an otherwise useless word, is in him the expression of the general Greek sense, that land of any kind was in nowise grateful or acceptable till there was *wood* upon it (or corn; but the corn, in the flats, could not be seen so far as the black masses of forest on the hill sides), and that, as in being rushy and corn-giving, the low land, so in being woody, the high land was most grateful to the mind of the man who for days and nights had been wearied on the engulphing sea. And this general idea of wood and corn, as the types of the fatness of the whole earth, is beautifully marked in another place of the *Odyssey*,† where the sailors in a desert island, having no flour of corn to offer as a meat offering with their sacrifices, take the leaves of the trees, and scatter them over the burnt offering instead.

§ 23. But still, every expression of the pleasure which Ulysses has in this landing and resting, contains uninterruptedly the reference to the utility and sensible pleasantness of all things, not to their beauty. After his first grateful kiss given to the corn-growing land, he considers immediately how he is to pass the night; for some minutes hesitating whether it will be best to expose himself to the misty chill from the river, or run the risk of wild beasts

* *Odyssey*, v. 398, 463.
† *Odyssey*, xii. 357.

[1] [*Odyssey*, v. 395, 398.]

in the wood. He decides for the wood, and finds in it a bower formed by a sweet and a wild olive tree, interlacing their branches, or—perhaps more accurately translating Homer's intensely graphic expression—"changing their branches with each other" (it is very curious how often, in an entanglement of wood, one supposes the branches to belong to the wrong trees) and forming a roof penetrated by neither rain, sun, nor wind. Under this bower Ulysses collects the "*vain* (or *frustrate*) outpouring of the dead leaves"—another exquisite expression, used elsewhere of useless grief or shedding of tears;—and, having got enough together, makes his bed of them, and goes to sleep, having covered himself up with them, "as embers are covered up with ashes."[1]

Nothing can possibly be more intensely possessive of the *facts* than this whole passage; the sense of utter deadness and emptiness, and frustrate fall in the leaves; of dormant life in the human body,—the fire, and heroism, and strength of it, lulled under the dead brown heap, as embers under ashes, and the knitting of interchanged and close strength of living boughs above. But there is not the smallest apparent sense of there being *beauty* elsewhere than in the human being. The wreathed wood is admired simply as being a perfect roof for it; the fallen leaves only as being a perfect bed for it; and there is literally no more excitement of emotion in Homer, as he describes them, nor does he expect us to be more excited or touched by hearing about them, than if he had been telling us how the chambermaid at the Bull aired the four-poster, and put on two extra blankets.

§ 24. Now, exactly this same contemplation of subservience to human use makes the Greek take some pleasure in *rocks*, when they assume one particular form, but one only —that of a *cave*. They are evidently quite frightful things to him under any other condition, and most of all if they

[1] [*Odyssey*, v. 481–489; and for the "exquisite expression, used elsewhere," see *Odyssey*, xiv. 215.]

are rough and jagged; but if smooth, looking "sculptured,"[1] like the sides of a ship, and forming a cave or shelter for him, he begins to think them endurable. Hence, associating the ideas of rich and sheltering wood, sea, becalmed and made useful as a port by projecting promontories of rock, and smoothed caves or grottoes in the rocks themselves, we get the pleasantest idea which the Greek could form of a landscape, next to a marsh with poplars in it; not, indeed, if possible, ever to be without these last; thus, in commending the Cyclops' country as one possessed of every perfection, Homer first says: "They have soft *marshy* meadows near the sea, and good, rich, crumbling, ploughing-land, giving fine deep crops, and vines always giving fruit;" then, "a port so quiet, that they have no need of cables in it: and at the head of the port, a beautiful clear spring just *under a cave*, and *aspen poplars all round it*." *

§ 25. This, it will be seen, is very nearly Homer's usual "ideal;" but, going into the middle of the island, Ulysses comes on a rougher and less agreeable bit, though still fulfilling certain required conditions of endurableness; a "cave shaded with laurels," which, having no poplars about it, is, however, meant to be somewhat frightful, and only fit to be inhabited by a Cyclops.[2] So in the country of the Læstrygons, Homer, preparing his reader gradually for something very disagreeable, represents the rocks as bare and "exposed to the sun;" only with some smooth and slippery roads over them, by which the trucks bring down wood from the higher hills. Any one familiar with Swiss slopes of hills must remember how often he has descended,

* *Odyssey*, ix. 132, etc. Hence Milton's

> "From haunted spring, and dale,
> Edged with poplar pale."[3]

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[1] [γλαφυρός: *Il.* ii. 88, etc.: see below, pp. 305–306.]
[2] [*Odyssey*, ix. 183; the next reference is *Odyssey*, x. 88.]
[3] [*Hymn on Christ's Nativity*, 184.]

sometimes faster than was altogether intentional, by these same slippery woodman's truck roads.

And thus, in general, whenever the landscape is intended to be lovely, it verges towards the ploughed land and poplars; or, at worst, to *woody* rocks; but, if intended to be painful, the rocks are bare and "sharp."[1] This last epithet, constantly used by Homer for mountains, does not altogether correspond, in Greek, to the English term, nor is it intended merely to characterize the sharp mountain summits; for it never would be applied simply to the edge or point of a sword, but signifies rather "harsh," "bitter," or "painful," being applied habitually to fate, death, and in *Od.* xi. 333 to a halter; and, as expressive of general objectionableness and unpleasantness, to all high, dangerous, or peaked mountains, as the Maleian promontory (a much dreaded one), the crest of Parnassus, the Tereian mountain, and a grim or untoward, though, by keeping off the force of the sea, protective, rock at the mouth of the Jardanus; as well as habitually to inaccessible or impregnable fortresses built on heights.

§ 26. In all this I cannot too strongly mark the utter absence of any trace of the feeling for what we call the picturesque, and the constant dwelling of the writer's mind on what was available, pleasant, or useful; his ideas respecting all landscape being not uncharacteristically summed, finally, by Pallas herself; when, meeting Ulysses, who after his long wandering does not recognize his own country, and meaning to describe it as politely and soothingly as possible, she says:*—"This Ithaca of ours is, indeed, a rough country enough, and not good for driving in; but, still, things might be worse: it has plenty of corn, and good wine, and *always rain*, and soft nourishing dew, and it has good feeding for

* *Odyssey*, xiii. 236, etc.

[1] [αἰπύς: applied to the Maleian promontory, *Od.* iii. 287; Parnassus, *Od.* xix. 431; Tereian mountain, *Il.* ii. 829; Jardanus, *Od.* iii. 293; and habitually, *Il.* ii. 603, v. 367, etc.]

goats and oxen, and all manner of wood, and springs fit to drink at all the year round."

We shall see presently[1] how the blundering, pseudo-picturesque, pseudo-classical minds of Claude and the Renaissance landscape-painters, wholly missing Homer's practical common sense, and equally incapable of feeling the quiet natural grace and sweetness of his asphodel meadows, tender aspen poplars, or running vines,—fastened on his *ports* and *caves*, as the only available features of his scenery; and appointed the type of "classical landscape" thenceforward to consist in a bay of insipid sea, and a rock with a hole through it.*

§ 27. It may indeed be thought that I am assuming too hastily that this was the general view of the Greeks respecting landscape, because it was Homer's. But I believe the true mind of a nation, at any period, is always best ascertainable by examining that of its greatest men; and that simpler and truer results will be attainable for us by simply comparing Homer, Dante, and Walter Scott than by attempting (what my limits must have rendered absurdly inadequate, and in which, also, both my time and knowledge must have failed me) an analysis of the landscape in the range of contemporary literature. All that I can do, is to state the general impression, which has been made upon me by my desultory reading, and to mark accurately the grounds for this impression in the works of the greatest men. Now it is quite true that in others of the Greeks, especially in Æschylus and Aristophanes, there is infinitely more of modern feeling, of pathetic fallacy, love of picturesque or beautiful form, and other such elements, than there is in

* Educated, as we shall see hereafter, first in this school, Turner gave the hackneyed composition a strange power and freshness, in his Glaucus and Scylla.[2]

[1] [See in the next volume, ch. xvi. §§ 36, 37.]

[2] [For the fondness of some painters for "rocks with holes," see "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. p. 472. "Glaucus and Scylla" was a subject engraved for (but not published in) *Liber Studiorum;* the drawing is No. 882 in the National Gallery.]

Homer; but then these appear to me just the parts of them which were not Greek, the elements of their minds by which (as one division of the human race always must be with subsequent ones) they are connected with the mediævals and moderns. And without doubt, in his influence over future mankind, Homer is eminently the Greek of Greeks: if I were to associate any one with him it would be Herodotus, and I believe all I have said of the Homeric landscape will be found equally true of the Herodotean, as assuredly it will be of the Platonic;—the contempt, which Plato sometimes expresses by the mouth of Socrates, for the country in general, except so far as it is shady, and has cicadas and running streams to make pleasant noises in it, being almost ludicrous.[1] But Homer is the great type, and the more notable one because of his influence on Virgil, and, through him, on Dante, and all the after ages: and, in like manner, if we can get the abstract of mediæval landscape out of Dante, it will serve us as well as if we had read all the songs of the troubadours, and help us to the farther changes in derivative temper, down to all modern time.

§ 28. I think, therefore, the reader may safely accept the conclusions about Greek landscape which I have got for him out of Homer; and in these he will certainly perceive something very different from the usual imaginations we form of Greek feelings. We think of the Greeks as poetical, ideal, imaginative, in a way that a modern poet or novelist is; supposing that their thoughts about their mythology and world were as visionary and artificial as ours are: but I think the passages I have quoted show that it was not so, although it may be difficult for us to apprehend the strange minglings in them of the elements of faith, which, in our days, have been blended with other parts of human nature in a totally different guise. Perhaps the Greek mind may be best imagined by taking, as its groundwork, that of a good, conscientious, but illiterate Scotch Presbyterian Border farmer of a century or two back, having perfect

[1] [See, for instance, *Phædrus*, 230.]

faith in the bodily appearances of Satan and his imps; and in all kelpies, brownies, and fairies. Substitute for the indignant terrors in this man's mind, a general persuasion of the *Divinity*, more or less beneficent, yet faultful, of all these beings; that is to say, take away his belief in the demoniacal malignity of the fallen spiritual world, and lower, in the same degree, his conceptions of the angelical, retaining for him the same firm faith in both; keep his ideas about flowers and beautiful scenery much as they are,—his delight in regular ploughed land and meadows, and a neat garden (only with rows of gooseberry bushes instead of vines), being, in all probability, about accurately representative of the feelings of Ulysses; then, let the military spirit that is in him, glowing against the Border forager, or the foe of old Flodden and Chevy-Chase, be made more principal, with a higher sense of nobleness in soldiership, not as a careless excitement, but a knightly duty; and increased by high cultivation of every personal quality, not of mere shaggy strength, but graceful strength, aided by a softer climate, and educated in all proper harmony of sight and sound; finally, instead of an informed Christian, suppose him to have only the patriarchal Jewish knowledge of the Deity, and even this obscured by tradition, but still thoroughly solemn and faithful, requiring his continual service as a priest of burnt sacrifice and meat offering; and I think we shall get a pretty close approximation to the vital being of a true old Greek; some slight difference still existing in a feeling which the Scotch farmer would have of a pleasantness in blue hills and running streams, wholly wanting in the Greek mind; and perhaps also some difference of views on the subjects of truth and honesty. But the main points, the easy, athletic, strongly logical and argumentative, yet fanciful and credulous, characters of mind, would be very similar in both; and the most serious change in the substance of the stuff among the modifications above suggested as necessary to turn the Scot into the Greek, is that effect of softer climate and surrounding luxury,

inducing the practice of various forms of polished art,—the more polished, because the practical and realistic tendency of the Hellenic mind (if my interpretation of it be right) would quite prevent it from taking pleasure in any irregularities of form, or imitations of the weeds and wildnesses of that mountain nature with which it thought itself born to contend. In its utmost refinement of work, it sought eminently for orderliness; carried the principle of the leeks in squares, and fountains in pipes, perfectly out in its streets and temples; formalized whatever decoration it put into its minor architectural mouldings, and reserved its whole heart and power to represent the action of living men, or gods, though not unconscious, meanwhile, of

> "The simple, the sincere delight;
> The habitual scene of hill and dale;
> The rural herds, the vernal gale;
> The tangled vetches' purple bloom;
> The fragrance of the bean's perfume,—
> Theirs, theirs alone, who cultivate the soil,
> And drink the cup of thirst, and eat the bread of toil."[1]

[1] [Shenstone: *Rural Elegance, an Ode to the late Duchess of Somerset*, written 1750, stanza 17. Ruskin does not give the *ipsissima verba*. The first line is "Adieu the simple," etc.; in line 4, "vetch's"; and line 6 is "Be theirs alone," etc.]

CHAPTER XIV

OF MEDIÆVAL LANDSCAPE:—FIRST, THE FIELDS

§ 1. In our examination of the spirit of classical landscape, we were obliged to confine ourselves to what is left to us in written description. Some interesting results might indeed have been obtained by examining the Egyptian and Ninevite landscape sculpture,[1] but in nowise conclusive enough to be worth the pains of the inquiry; for the landscape of sculpture is necessarily confined in range, and usually inexpressive of the complete feelings of the workman, being introduced rather to explain the place and circumstances of events, than for its own sake. In the Middle Ages, however, the case is widely different. We have written landscape, sculptured landscape, and painted landscape, all bearing united testimony to the tone of the national mind in almost every remarkable locality of Europe.

§ 2. That testimony, taken in its breadth, is very curiously conclusive. It marks the mediæval mind as agreeing altogether with the ancients, in holding that flat land, brooks, and groves of aspens, compose the pleasant places of the earth, and that rocks and mountains are, for inhabitation, altogether to be reprobated and detested; but as disagreeing with the classical mind totally in this other most important respect, that the pleasant flat land is never a ploughed field, nor a rich lotus meadow good for pasture, but *garden* ground covered with flowers, and divided by fragrant hedges, with a castle in the middle of it. The aspens are delighted in, not because they are good for

[1] [For a reference to Ninevite landscape sculpture, see *Seven Lamps*, Vol. VIII. p. 170.]

"coach-making men"[1] to make cart-wheels of, but because they are shady and graceful; and the fruit-trees, covered with delicious fruit, especially apple and orange, occupy still more important positions in the scenery. Singing birds —not "sea crows,"[2] but nightingales *—perched on every bough: and the ideal occupation of mankind is not to cultivate either the garden or the meadow, but to gather roses and eat oranges in the one, and ride out hawking over the other.

Finally, mountain scenery, though considered as disagreeable for general inhabitation, is always introduced as being proper to meditate in, or to encourage communion with higher beings; and in the ideal landscape of daily life, mountains are considered agreeable things enough, so that they be far enough away.

In this great change there are three vital points to be noticed.

Three essential characters;
1. Pride in idleness.[3]

§ 3. The first, the disdain of agricultural pursuits by the nobility; a fatal change, and one gradually bringing about the ruin of that nobility. It is expressed in the mediæval landscape by the eminently pleasurable and horticultural character of everything; by the fences, hedges, castle walls, and masses of useless, but lovely flowers, especially roses. The knights and ladies are represented always as singing, or making love, in these pleasant places. The idea of setting an old knight, like Laertes (whatever his state of fallen fortune), "with thick gloves on to keep his hands from the thorns,"[4] to prune a row of vines, would have been regarded as the most monstrous violation of the decencies

* The peculiar dislike felt by the mediævals for the *sea,* is so interesting a subject of inquiry, that I have reserved it for separate discussion in another work, in present preparation, *Harbours of England.*[5]

[1] [ἁρματοπηγὸς ἀνὴρ: *Iliad,* iv. 485.]
[2] [A reference to the sea-crows in Calypso's cave, *Odyssey,* v. 66.]
[3] [Ruskin here resumes the marginal summaries, as explained above, p. 12.]
[4] [See above, p. 236.]
[5] [See §§ 8–12 of that work, in Vol. XIII.]

of life; and a senator, once detected in the home employments of Cincinnatus, could, I suppose, thenceforward hardly have appeared in society.

2. Poetical observance of nature.

§ 4. The second vital point is the evidence of a more sentimental enjoyment of external nature. A Greek, wishing really to enjoy himself, shut himself into a beautiful atrium, with an excellent dinner, and a society of philosophical or musical friends. But a mediæval knight went into his pleasance, to gather roses and hear the birds sing; or rode out hunting or hawking. His evening feast, though riotous enough sometimes, was not the height of his day's enjoyment; and if the attractions of the world are to be shown typically to him, as opposed to the horrors of death, they are never represented by a full feast in a chamber, but by a delicate dessert in an orange grove, with musicians under the trees; or a ride on a May morning, hawk on fist.

This change is evidently a healthy, and a very interesting one.

3. Disturbed conscience.

§ 5. The third vital point is the marked sense that this hawking and apple-eating are not altogether right; that there is something else to be done in the world than that; and that the mountains, as opposed to the pleasant garden-ground, are places where that other something may best be learned; which is evidently a piece of infinite and new respect for the mountains, and another healthy change in the tone of the human heart.

Let us glance at the signs and various results of these changes one by one.

Derivative characters: 1. Love of flowers.

§ 6. The two first named, evil and good as they are, are very closely connected. The more poetical delight in external nature proceeds just from the fact that it is no longer looked upon with the eye of the farmer; and in proportion as the herbs and flowers cease to be regarded as useful, they are felt to be charming. Leeks are not now the most important objects in the garden, but lilies and roses: the herbage which

a Greek would have looked at only with a view to the number of horses it would feed, is regarded by the mediæval knight as a green carpet for fair feet to dance upon, and the beauty of its softness and colour is proportionally felt by him; while the brook, which the Greek rejoiced to dismiss into a reservoir under the palace threshold, would be, by the mediæval, distributed into pleasant pools, or forced into fountains; and regarded alternately as a mirror for fair faces, and a witchery to ensnare the sunbeams and the rainbow.

2. Less definite gratitude to God.

§ 7. And this change of feeling involves two others, very important. When the flowers and grass were regarded as means of life, and therefore (as the thoughtful labourer of the soil must always regard them) with the reverence due to those gifts of God which were most necessary to his existence; although their own beauty was less felt, their proceeding from the Divine hand was more seriously acknowledged, and the herb yielding seed, the fruit-tree yielding fruit, though in themselves less admired, were yet solemnly connected in the heart with the reverence of Ceres, Pomona, or Pan. But when the sense of these necessary uses was more or less lost, among the upper classes, by the delegation of the art of husbandry to the hands of the peasant, the flower and fruit, whose bloom or richness thus became a mere source of pleasure, were regarded with less solemn sense of the Divine gift in them; and were converted rather into toys than treasures, chance gifts for gaiety, rather than promised rewards of labour; so that while the Greek could hardly have trodden the formal furrow, or plucked the clusters from the trellised vine, without reverent thoughts of the deities of field and leaf, who gave the seed to fructify, and the bloom to darken, the mediæval knight plucked the violet to wreathe in his lady's hair, or strewed the idle rose on the turf at her feet, with little sense of anything in the nature that gave them, but a frail, accidental, involuntary exuberance; while also the Jewish sacrificial system being now done away, as well

as the Pagan mythology, and, with it, the whole conception of meat offering or firstfruits offering, the chiefest seriousnesses of all the thoughts connected with the gifts of nature faded from the minds of the classes of men concerned with art and literature; while the peasant, reduced to serf level, was incapable of imaginative thought, owing to his want of general cultivation. But on the other hand, exactly in proportion as the idea of definite spiritual presence in material nature was lost, the mysterious sense of *unaccountable* life in the things themselves would be increased, and the mind would instantly be laid open to all those currents of fallacious, but pensive and pathetic sympathy, which we have seen to be characteristic of modern times.[1]

3. *Gloom, caused by enforced solitude.*

§ 8. Farther: a singular difference would necessarily result from the far greater loneliness of baronial life, deprived as it was of all interest in agricultural pursuits. The palace of a Greek leader in early times might have gardens, fields, and farms around it, but was sure to be near some busy city or sea-port: in later times, the city itself became the principal dwelling-place, and the country was visited only to see how the farm went on, or traversed in a line of march. Far other was the life of the mediæval baron, nested on his solitary jut of crag; entering into cities only occasionally for some grave political or warrior's purpose, and, for the most part, passing the years of his life in lion-like isolation; the village inhabited by his retainers straggling indeed about the slopes of the rocks at his feet, but his own dwelling standing gloomily apart, between them and the uncompanionable clouds, commanding, from sunset to sunrise, the flowing flame of some calm unvoyaged river, and the endless undulation of the untraversable hills. How different must the thoughts about nature have been, of the noble who lived among the bright marble porticoes of the Greek groups of temple or palace,—in the midst of a

[1] [Above, § 4 and ch. xii.; with regard to § 7, see the note on § 40, below.]

plain covered with corn and olives, and by the shore of a sparkling and freighted sea,—from those of the master of some mountain promontory in the green recesses of Northern Europe, watching night by night, from amongst his heaps of storm-broken stone, rounded into towers, the lightning of the lonely sea flash round the sands of Harlech, or the mists changing their shapes for ever, among the changeless pines that fringe the crests of Jura.

§ 9. Nor was it without similar effect on the minds of men that their journeyings and pilgrimages became more frequent than those of the Greek, the extent of ground traversed in the course of them larger, and the mode of travel more companionless. To the Greek, a voyage to Egypt, or the Hellespont, was the subject of lasting fame and fable, and the forests of the Danube and the rocks of Sicily closed for him the gates of the intelligible world. What parts of that narrow world he crossed were crossed with fleets or armies; the camp always populous on the plain, and the ships drawn in cautious symmetry around the shore. But to the mediæval knight, from Scottish moor to Syrian sand, the world was one great exercise ground, or field of adventure; the staunch pacing of his charger penetrated the pathlessness of outmost forest, and sustained the sultriness of the most secret desert. Frequently alone,—or, if accompanied, for the most part only by retainers of lower rank, incapable of entering into complete sympathy with any of his thoughts, he must have been compelled often to enter into dim companionship with the silent nature around him, and must assuredly sometimes have talked to the wayside flowers of his love, and to the fading clouds of his ambition.

And frequent pilgrimage.

§ 10. But, on the other hand, the idea of retirement from the world for the sake of self-mortification, of combat with demons, or communion with angels, and with their King,—authoritatively commended as it was to all men by the continual practice of Christ Himself,—gave to all mountain solitude at once a sanctity and

4. Dread of mountains.

a terror, in the mediæval mind, which were altogether different from anything that it had possessed in the un-Christian periods. On the one side, there was an idea of sanctity attached to rocky wilderness, because it had always been among hills that the Deity had manifested Himself most intimately to men, and to the hills that His saints had nearly always retired for meditation, for especial communion with Him, and to prepare for death. Men acquainted with the history of Moses, alone at Horeb, or with Israel at Sinai,—of Elijah by the brook Cherith, and in the Horeb cave; of the deaths of Moses and Aaron on Hor and Nebo; of the preparation of Jephthah's daughter for her death among the Judæa mountains; of the continual retirement of Christ Himself to the mountains for prayer, His temptation in the desert of the Dead Sea, His sermon on the hills of Capernaum, His transfiguration on Mount Hermon, and His evening and morning walks over Olivet for the four or five days preceding His crucifixion,[1]—were not likely to look with irreverent or unloving eyes upon the blue hills that girded their golden horizon, or drew down upon them the mysterious clouds out of the height of the darker heaven. But with this impression of their greater sanctity was involved also that of a peculiar terror. In all this,—their haunting by the memories of prophets, the presences of angels, and the everlasting thoughts and words of the Redeemer,—the mountain ranges seemed separated from the active world, and only to be fitly approached by hearts which were condemnatory of it. Just in so much as it appeared necessary for the noblest men to retire to the hill-recesses before their missions could be accomplished, or their spirits perfected, in so far did the daily world seem by comparison to be pronounced profane and dangerous; and to those who loved that world, and its

[1] [The Bible references here are—Exodus iii. 12; Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2; 1 Kings xvii. 5; Deuteronomy xxxiv. 5; Numbers xx. 28; Judges xi. 37; Matthew iv. 1–4, v.–vii. 27, xvii. 1, 2; Luke ix. 28–36; Matthew xxvi. 30; Luke xxii. 39.]

work, the mountains were thus voiceful with perpetual rebuke, and necessarily contemplated with a kind of pain and fear, such as a man engrossed by vanity feels at being by some accident forced to hear a startling sermon, or to assist at a funeral service. Every association of this kind was deepened by the practice and the precept of the time; and thousands of hearts, which might otherwise have felt that there was loveliness in the wild landscape, shrank from it in dread, because they knew that the monk retired to it for penance, and the hermit for contemplation. The horror which the Greek had felt for hills only when they were uninhabitable and barren, attached itself now to many of the sweetest spots of earth; the feeling was conquered by political interests, but never by admiration; military ambition seized the frontier rock, or maintained itself in the unassailable pass; but it was only for their punishment, or in their despair, that men consented to tread the crocused slopes of the Chartreuse,[1] or the soft glades and dewy pastures of Vallombrosa.

§ 11. In all these modifications of temper and principle there appears much which tends to a passionate, affectionate, or awe-struck observance of the features of natural scenery, closely resembling, in all but this superstitious dread of mountains, our feelings at the present day. But *one* character which the mediævals had in common with the ancients, and that exactly the most eminent character in both, opposed itself steadily to all the feelings we have hitherto been examining, — the admiration, namely, and constant watchfulness of human beauty. Exercised in nearly the same manner as the Greeks, from their youth upwards, their countenances were cast even in a higher mould; for, although somewhat less regular in feature, and affected by minglings of Northern bluntness and stolidity of general expression, together with greater thinness of lip and shaggy formlessness of brow, these less sculpturesque features were,

[1] [Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 17.]

nevertheless, touched with a seriousness and refinement proceeding first from the modes of thought inculcated by the Christian religion, and secondly from their more romantic and various life. Hence a degree of personal beauty, both male and female, was attained in the Middle Ages, with which classical periods could show nothing for a moment comparable; and this beauty was set forth by the most perfect splendour, united with grace, in dress, which the human race have hitherto invented. The strength of their art-genius was directed in great part to this object; and their best workmen and most brilliant fanciers were employed in wreathing the mail or embroidering the robe. The exquisite arts of enamelling and chasing metal enabled them to make the armour as radiant and delicate as the plumage of a tropical bird; and the most various and vivid imaginations were displayed in the alternations of colour, and fiery freaks of form, on shield and crest: so that of all the beautiful things which the eyes of men could fall upon, in the world about them, the most beautiful must have been a young knight riding out in morning sunshine, and in faithful hope.

> "His broad, clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
> On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
> From underneath his helmet flow'd
> His coal-black curls, as on he rode.
> All in the blue, unclouded weather,
> Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather;
> The helmet and the helmet-feather
> Burn'd like one burning flame together;
> The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
> Like to some branch of stars we see
> Hung in the Golden Galaxy." [1]

§ 12. Now, the effect of this superb presence of human beauty on men in general was, exactly as it had been in Greek times, first to turn their thoughts and glances in great part away from all other

5. Care for human beauty.

[1] [Tennyson: *The Lady of Shalott*, part iii. (portions of verses 3, 2, and 1 strung together).]

beauty but that, and to make the grass of the field take to them always more or less the aspect of a carpet to dance upon, a lawn to tilt upon, or a serviceable crop of hay; and, secondly, in what attention they paid to this lower nature, to make them dwell exclusively on what was graceful, symmetrical, and bright in colour. All that was rugged, rough, dark, wild, unterminated, they rejected at once, as the domain of "salvage men"[1] and monstrous giants: all that they admired was tender, bright, balanced, enclosed, symmetrical—only symmetrical in the noble and free sense: for what we moderns call "symmetry," or "balance," differs as much from mediæval symmetry as the poise of a grocer's scales, or the balance of an Egyptian mummy with its hands tied to its sides, does from the balance of a knight on his horse, striking with the battle-axe, at the gallop; the mummy's balance looking wonderfully perfect, and yet sure to be one-sided if you weigh the dust of it,—the knight's balance swaying and changing like the wind, and yet as true and accurate as the laws of life.

6. Symmetrical government of design.

§ 13. And this love of symmetry was still further enhanced by the peculiar duties required of art at the time; for, in order to fit a flower or leaf for inlaying in armour, or showing clearly in glass, it was absolutely necessary to take away its complexity, and reduce it to the condition of a disciplined and orderly pattern; and this the more, because, for all military purposes, the device, whatever it was, had to be distinctly intelligible at extreme distance. That it should be a good imitation of nature, when seen near, was of no moment; but it was of highest moment that when first the knight's banner flashed in the sun at the turn of the mountain road, or rose, torn and bloody, through the drift of the battle dust, it should still be discernible what the bearing was.

[1] [The modern and different meaning of "salvage" has driven it out of use in its original meaning "savage," as, for instance, in Scott (*Guy Mannering*, ch. xli.): "on either side stood as supporters, in full human size, or larger, a salvage man *proper*, to use the language of heraldry, *wreathed and cinctured*, and holding in his hand an oak tree *eradicated*."]

"At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And first the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew;
Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war.
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amidst the scene of tumult, high,
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly,
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright." [1]

It was needed, not merely that they should see it was a falcon, but Lord Marmion's falcon; not only a lion, but the Howard's lion. Hence, to the one imperative end of *intelligibility*, every minor resemblance to nature was sacrificed, and above all, the *curved*, which are chiefly the confusing lines; so that the straight, elongated back, doubly elongated tail, projected and separate claws, and other rectilinear unnaturalnesses of form, became the means by which the leopard was, in midst of the mist and storm of battle, distinguished from the dog, or the lion from the wolf; the most admirable fierceness and vitality being, in spite of these necessary changes (so often shallowly sneered at by the modern workman), obtained by the old designer.

Farther, it was necessary to the brilliant harmony of colour, and clear setting forth of everything, that all confusing shadows, all dim and doubtful lines should be rejected: hence at once an utter denial of natural appearances by the great body of workmen; and a calm rest in a practice of representation which would make either boar or lion blue, scarlet, or golden, according to the device of the knight, or the need of such and such a colour in that place of the pattern; and which wholly denied that any

[1] [*Marmion* canto vi. 26; three lines are omitted after "The broken billows of the war."]

ubstance ever cast a shadow, or was affected by any kind of obscurity.

§ 14. All this was in its way, and for its end, absolutely right, admirable, and delightful; and those who despise it, laugh at it, or derive no pleasure from it, are utterly ignorant of the highest principles of art, and are mere tyros and beginners in the practice of colour. But, admirable though it might be, one necessary result of it was a farther withdrawal of the observation of men from the refined and subtle beauty of nature; so that the workman who first was led to think *lightly* of natural beauty, as being subservient to human, was next led to think *inaccurately* of natural beauty, because he had continually to alter and simplify it for his practical purposes.

7. Therefore, inaccurate rendering of nature.

§ 15. Now, assembling all these different sources of the peculiar mediæval feeling towards nature in one view, we have:

1st. Love of the garden instead of love of the farm, leading to a sentimental contemplation of nature, instead of a practical and agricultural one. (§§ 3, 4, 6.)

2nd. Loss of sense of actual Divine presence, leading to fancies of fallacious animation, in herbs, flowers, clouds, etc. (§ 7.)

3rd. Perpetual, and more or less undisturbed, companionship with wild nature. (§§ 8, 9.)

4th. Apprehension of demoniacal and angelic presence among mountains, leading to a reverent dread of them. (§ 10.)

5th. Principalness of delight in human beauty, leading to comparative contempt of natural objects. (§ 11.)

6th. Consequent love of order, light, intelligibility, and symmetry, leading to dislike of the wildness, darkness, and mystery of nature. (§ 12.)

7th. Inaccuracy of observance of nature, induced by the habitual practice of change on its forms. (§ 13.)

From these mingled elements, we should necessarily expect to find resulting, as the characteristic of mediæval landscape art, compared with Greek, a far higher sentiment about it, and affection for it, more or less subdued by still greater respect for the loveliness of man, and therefore subordinated entirely to human interests; mingled with curious traces of terror, piety, or superstition, and cramped by various formalisms,—some wise and necessary, some feeble, and some exhibiting needless ignorance and inaccuracy.

Under these lights, let us examine the facts.

§ 16. The landscape of the Middle Ages is represented in a central manner by the illuminations of the MSS. of Romances, executed about the middle of the fifteenth century. On one side of these stands the earlier landscape work, more or less treated as simple decoration; on the other, the later landscape work, becoming more or less affected with modern ideas and modes of imitation.

These central fifteenth century landscapes are almost invariably composed of a grove or two tall trees, a winding river, and a castle, or a garden: the peculiar feature of both these last being *trimness;* the artist always dwelling especially on the fences; wreathing the espaliers indeed prettily with sweetbriar, and putting pots of orange-trees on the tops of the walls, but taking great care that there shall be no loose bricks in the one, nor broken stake in the other, —the trouble and ceaseless warfare of the times having rendered security one of the first elements of pleasantness, and making it impossible for any artist to conceive Paradise but as surrounded by a moat, or to distinguish the road to it better than by its narrow wicket gate, and watchful porter.

§ 17. One of these landscapes is thus described by Macaulay:—"We have an exact square, enclosed by the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, each with a convenient bridge in the centre; rectangular beds of flowers; a long canal neatly bricked and railed in; the tree of knowledge, clipped like one of the limes behind the Tuileries,

tanding in the centre of the grand alley; the snake turned round it, the man on the right hand, the woman on the eft, and the beasts drawn up in an exact circle round hem."[1]

All this is perfectly true; and seems in the description ery curiously foolish. The only curious folly, however, in he matter is the exquisite *naïveté* of the historian, in supposing that the quaint landscape indicates in the understanding of the painter so marvellous an inferiority to his own; whereas, it is altogether his own wit that is at fault, in not omprehending that nations, whose youth had been decimated among the sands and serpents of Syria, knew probbly nearly as much about Eastern scenery as youths trained n the schools of the modern Royal Academy; and that this urious symmetry was entirely symbolic, only more or less nodified by the various instincts which I have traced above. Ir. Macaulay is evidently quite unaware that the serpent vith the human head, and body twisted round the tree, was he universally-accepted symbol of the evil angel, from the awn of art up to Michael Angelo; that the greatest sacred rtists invariably place the man on the one side of the tree, ne woman on the other, in order to denote the enthroned nd balanced dominion about to fall by temptation; that the easts are ranged (when they *are* so, though this is much nore seldom the case,) in a circle round them, expressly to nark that they were then not wild, but obedient, intelligent, nd orderly beasts; and that the four rivers are trenched nd enclosed on the four sides, to mark that the waters which ow wander in waste, and destroy in fury, had then for neir principal office to "water the garden" of God.[2] The escription is, however, sufficiently apposite and interesting s bearing upon what I have noted respecting the eminent *ence*-loving spirit of the mediævals.

§ 18. Together with this peculiar formality, we find an inite delight in drawing pleasant flowers, always articulating

[1] [Macaulay's *Essays:* "Moore's Life of Lord Byron."]
[2] [Genesis ii. 10.]

and outlining them completely; the sky is always blue having only a few delicate white clouds in it, and in the distance are blue mountains, very far away, if the landscape is to be simply delightful; but brought near, and divided into quaint overhanging rocks, if it is intended to be meditative, or a place of saintly seclusion.[1] But the whole of it always,—flowers, castles, brooks, clouds, and rocks,—subordinate to the human figures in the foreground, and painted for no other end than that of explaining their adventures and occupations.

§ 19. Before the idea of landscape had been thus far developed, the representations of it had been purely typical the objects which had to be shown in order to explain the scene of the event, being firmly outlined, usually on a pure golden or chequered colour background, not on sky. The change from the golden background (characteristic of the finest thirteenth century work) and the coloured chequer (which in like manner belongs to the finest fourteenth) to the blue sky, gradated to the horizon, takes place early in the fifteenth century, and is the *crisis* of change in the spirit of mediæval art. Strictly speaking, we might divide the art of Christian times into two great masses—Symbolic and Imitative;—the symbolic, reaching from the earliest period down to the close of the fourteenth century, and the imitative from that close, to the present time; and then the most important circumstance indicative of the culminating point, or turn of tide, would be this of the change from chequered background to sky background. The uppermost figure in Plate 7 opposite, representing the tree of knowledge, taken from a somewhat late thirteenth century Hebrew manuscript (Additional 11,639) in the British Museum,

[1] [In the MS. Ruskin added here a reference to an illuminated missal :—
"Perhaps the most exquisite instance I remember of this kind of design in central landscape is the group of lilies in the garden in which Henry VI is in prayer."]

[2] [In Ruskin's notes on the illuminated MSS. in the British Museum (see Vol. XII p. lxviii.) is the following entry (1854) :—
"Add. 11,639. Glorious Hebrew one. See Trees at p. 330."
The MS. is of the Pentateuch. For the other figure in Plate 7, see *Modern Painters* vol. iv. ch. v. § 16 (Vol. VI. p. 93).]

7. Botany of 13th Century.
(Apple tree and Cyclamen.)

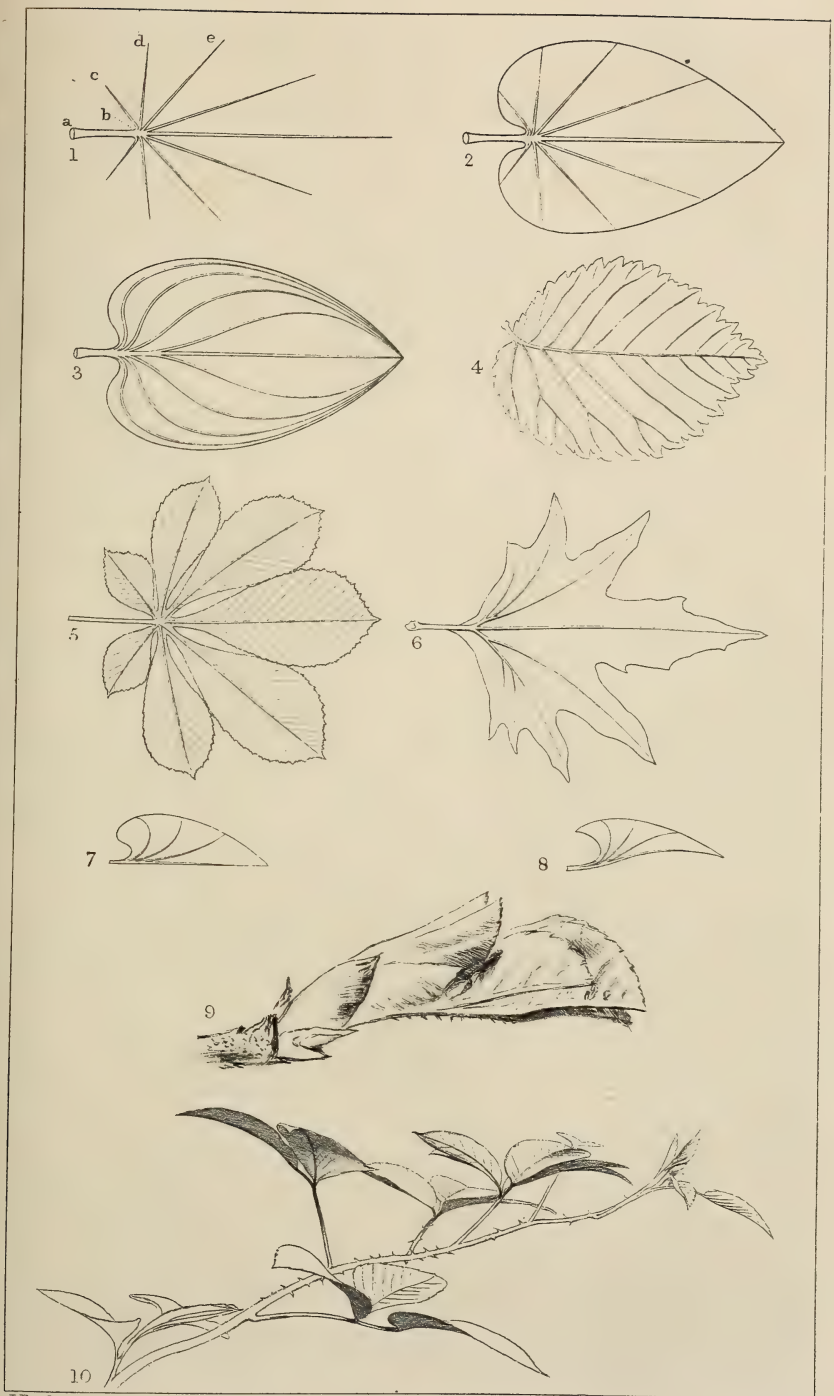
will at once illustrate Mr. Macaulay's "serpent turned round the tree," and the mode of introducing the chequered background, and will enable the reader better to understand the peculiar feeling of the period, which no more intended the formal walls or streams for an imitative representation of the Garden of Eden, than these chequers for an imitation of sky.

§ 20. The moment the sky is introduced (and it is curious how perfectly it is done *at once*, many manuscripts presenting in alternate pages, chequered backgrounds, and deep blue skies exquisitely gradated to the horizon)—the moment, I say, the sky is introduced, the spirit of art becomes for evermore changed, and thenceforward it gradually proposes imitation more and more as an end, until it reaches the Turnerian landscape. This broad division into two schools would therefore be the most true and accurate we could employ, but not the most convenient. For the great mediæval art lies in a cluster about the culminating point, including symbolism on one side, and imitation on the other, and extending like a radiant cloud upon the mountain peak of ages, partly down both sides of it, from the year 1200 to 1500; the brightest part of the cloud leaning a little backwards, and poising itself between 1250 and 1350. And therefore the most convenient arrangement is into Romanesque and barbaric art, up to 1200, mediæval art, 1200 to 1500,—and modern art, from 1500 downwards. But it is only in the earlier or symbolic mediæval art, reaching up to the close of the fourteenth century, that the peculiar modification of natural forms for decorative purposes is seen in its perfection, with all its beauty, and all its necessary shortcomings; the minds of men being accurately balanced between that honour for the superior human form which they shared with the Greek ages, and the sentimental love of nature which was peculiar to their own. The expression of the two feelings will be found to vary according to the material and place of the art; in painting, the conventional forms are more adopted, in order to obtain definition, and

brilliancy of colour, while in sculpture the life of nature is often rendered with a love and faithfulness which put modern art to shame. And in this earnest contemplation of the natural facts, united with an endeavour to simplify, for clear expression, the results of that contemplation, the ornamental artists arrived at two abstract conclusions about form, which are highly curious and interesting.

§ 21. They saw, first, that a leaf might always be considered as a sudden expansion of the stem that bore it; an uncontrollable expression of delight, on the part of the twig, that spring had come, shown in a fountain-like expiation of its tender green heart into the air. They saw that in this violent proclamation of its delight and liberty, whereas the twig had, until that moment, a disposition only to grow quietly forwards, it expressed its satisfaction and extreme pleasure in sunshine by springing out to right and left. Let *a b*, Fig. 1, Plate 8, be the twig growing forward in the direction from *a* to *b*. It reaches the point *b*, and then—spring coming,—not being able to contain itself, it bursts out in every direction, even springing backwards at first for joy; but as this backward direction is contrary to its own proper fate and nature, it cannot go on so long, and the length of each rib into which it separates is proportioned accurately to the degree in which the proceedings of that rib are in harmony with the natural destiny of the plant. Thus the rib *c*, entirely contradictory, by the direction of his life and energy, of the general intentions of the tree, is but a short-lived rib; *d*, not quite so opposite to his fate, lives longer; *e*, accommodating himself still more to the spirit of progress, attains a greater length still; and the largest rib of all is the one who has not yielded at all to the erratic disposition of the others when spring came, but, feeling quite as happy about the spring as they did, nevertheless took no holiday, minded his business, and grew straightforward.

§ 22. Fig. 6 in the same plate, which shows the disposition of the ribs in the leaf of an American Plane,



J. Ruskin.

R.P. Cuff.
Allen & Co. Sc.

8. The Growth of Leaves.

exemplifies the principle very accurately: it is indeed more notably seen in this than in most leaves, because the ribs at the base have evidently had a little fraternal quarrel about their spring holiday; and the more gaily-minded ones, getting together into trios on each side, have rather pooh-poohed and laughed at the seventh brother in the middle, who wanted to go on regularly, and attend to his work. Nevertheless, though thus starting quite by himself in life, this seventh brother, quietly pushing on in the right direction, lives longest, and makes the largest fortune, and the triple partnerships on the right and left meet with a very minor prosperity.

§ 23. Now if we enclose Fig. 1 in Plate 8 with two curves passing through the extremities of the ribs, we get Fig. 2, the central type of all leaves. Only this type is modified of course in a thousand ways by the life of the plant. If it be marsh or aquatic, instead of springing out in twigs, it is almost certain to expand in soft currents, as the liberated stream does at its mouth into the ocean, Fig. 3 (Alisma Plantago[1]); if it be meant for one of the crowned and lovely trees of the earth, it will separate into stars, and each ray of the leaf will form a ray of light in the crown, Fig. 5 (Horsechestnut); and if it be a commonplace tree, rather prudent and practical than imaginative, it will not expand all at once, but throw out the ribs every now and then along the central rib, like a merchant taking his occasional and restricted holiday, Fig. 4 (Elm).

§ 24. Now in the bud, where all these proceedings on the leaf's part are first imagined, the young leaf is generally (always?) doubled up in embryo, so as to present the profile of the half leaves, as Fig. 7, only in exquisite complexity of arrangement; Fig. 9, for instance, is the profile of the leaf-bud of a rose. Hence the general arrangement of line represented by Fig. 8 (in which the lower line is

[1] [Compare *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 168 and *n.*), and *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. pp. 268, 269); and for further studies of the horsechestnut, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. iii. §§ 12, 13; ch. iv. §§ 9–11; ch. x. § 12.]

slightly curved to express the bending life in the spine) is everlastingly typical of the expanding power of joyful vegetative youth; and it is of all simple forms the most exquisitely delightful to the human mind. It presents itself in a thousand different proportions and variations in the buds and profiles of leaves; those being always the loveliest in which, either by accidental perspective of position, or inherent character in the tree, it is most frequently presented to the eye. The branch of bramble, for instance, Fig. 10, at the bottom of Plate 8, owes its chief beauty to this per-

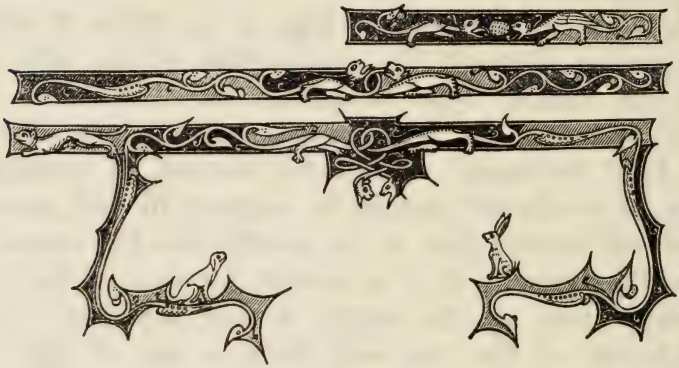


Fig. 3

petual recurrence of this typical form; and we shall find presently the enormous importance of it, even in mountain ranges, though, in these, *falling* force takes the place of *vital* force.

§ 25. This abstract conclusion the great thirteenth century artists were the first to arrive at; and whereas, before their time, ornament had been constantly refined into intricate and subdivided symmetries, they were content with this simple form as the termination of its most important features. Fig. 3, which is a scroll out of a Psalter executed in the latter half of the thirteenth century, is a sufficient example of a practice at that time absolutely universal.

§ 26. The second great discovery of the Middle Ages in

floral ornament, was that, in order completely to express the law of subordination among the leaf-ribs, two ribs were necessary, *and no more*, on each side of the leaf, forming a series of three with the central one, because proportion is between three terms at least.

That is to say, when they had only three ribs altogether, as *a*, Fig. 4, no *law* of relation was discernible between the ribs, or the leaflets they bore; but by the addition of a third on each side, as at *b*, proportion instantly was expressible, whether arithmetical or geometrical, or of any other kind. Hence the adoption of forms more or less approximating to that at *c* (young ivy), or *d* (wild geranium), as the favourite elements of their floral ornament, those leaves being, in their disposition of masses, the simplest which can express a perfect law of proportion just as the outline Fig. 7, Plate 8, is the simplest which can express a perfect law of growth.

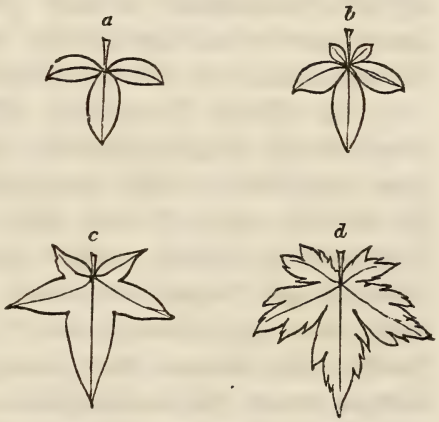


Fig. 4

Plate 9 opposite gives, in rude outline, the arrangement of the border of one of the pages of a missal in my own possession, executed for the Countess Yolande of Flanders,* in the latter half of the fourteenth century, and furnishing, in exhaustless variety, the most graceful examples I have ever seen of the favourite decoration at the period, commonly now known as the "Ivy-leaf" pattern.

§ 27. In thus reducing these two everlasting laws of

* Married to Philip, younger son of the King of Navarre, in 1352. She died in 1394.[1]

[1] [This manuscript is now in the collection of Mr. Henry Yates Thompson.]

beauty to their simplest possible exponents, the mediæval workmen were the first to discern and establish the principles of decorative art to the end of time, nor of decorative art merely, but of mass arrangement in general. For the members of any great composition, arranged about a centre, are always reducible to the law of the ivy leaf, the best cathedral entrances having five porches corresponding in proportional purpose to its five lobes (three being an imperfect, and seven a superfluous number); while the loveliest groups of lines attainable in any pictorial composition are always based on the section of the leaf-bud, Fig. 7, Plate 8, or on the relation of its ribs to the convex curve enclosing them.

§ 28. These discoveries of ultimate truth are, I believe, never made philosophically, but instinctively; so that wherever we find a high abstract result of the kind, we may be almost sure it has been the work of the penetrative imagination, acting under the influence of strong affection. Accordingly, when we enter on our botanical inquiries, I shall have occasion to show[1] with what tender and loving fidelity to nature the masters of the thirteenth century always traced the leading lines of their decorations, either in missal-painting or sculpture, and how totally in this respect their methods of subduing, for the sake of distinctness, the natural forms they loved so dearly, differ from the iron formalisms to which the Greeks, careless of all that was not completely divine or completely human, reduced the thorn of the acanthus, and softness of the lily. Nevertheless, in all this perfect and loving decorative art, we have hardly any careful references to other landscape features than herbs and flowers; mountains, water, and clouds are introduced so rudely, that the representations of them can never be received for anything else than letters or signs. Thus the *sign* of clouds, in the thirteenth century, is an undulating band, usually, in painting, of blue edged with white, in sculpture, wrought so as to resemble very nearly

[1] [See in the next volume, ch. xvii. §§ 19, 20 (Vol. VI. pp. 333–334).]

the folds of a curtain closely tied, and understood for clouds only by its position, as surrounding angels or saints in heaven, opening to souls ascending at the Last Judgment, or forming canopies over the Saviour or the Virgin. Water is represented by zigzag lines, nearly resembling those employed for clouds, but distinguished, in sculpture, by having fish in it;[1] in painting, both by fish and a more continuous blue or green colour. And when these unvaried symbols are associated under the influence of that love of firm fence, moat, and every other means of definition which we have seen to be one of the prevailing characteristics of the mediæval mind, it is not possible for us to conceive, through the rigidity of the signs employed, what were the real feelings of the workman or spectator about the natural landscape. We see that the thing carved or painted is not intended in anywise to imitate the truth, or convey to us the feelings which the workman had in contemplating the truth. He has got a way of talking about it so definite and cold, and tells us with his chisel so calmly that the knight had a castle to attack, or the saint a river to cross dryshod, without making the smallest effort to describe pictorially either castle or river, that we are left wholly at fault as to the nature of the emotion with which he contemplated the real objects. But that emotion, as the intermediate step between the feelings of the Grecian and the modern, it must be our aim to ascertain as clearly as possible; and, therefore, finding it not at this period completely expressed in visible art, we must, as we did with the Greeks, take up the written landscape instead, and examine this mediæval sentiment as we find it embodied in the poem of Dante.

§ 29. The thing that must first strike us in this respect, as we turn our thoughts to the poem, is, unquestionably, the *formality* of its landscape.

Milton's effort, in all that he tells us of his Inferno, is

[1] [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 272).]

to make it indefinite; Dante's, to make it *definite*. Both, indeed, describe it as entered through gates; but, within the gate, all is wild and fenceless with Milton, having indeed its four rivers,—the last vestige of the mediæval tradition,—but rivers which flow through a waste of mountain and moorland, and by "many a frozen, many a fiery Alp."[1] But Dante's Inferno is accurately separated into circles drawn with well-pointed compasses; mapped and properly surveyed in every direction, trenched in a thoroughly good style of engineering from depth to depth, and divided in the "*accurate* middle" (dritto mezzo)[2] of its deepest abyss, into a concentric series of ten moats and embankments, like those about a castle, with bridges from each embankment to the next; precisely in the manner of those bridges over Hiddekel and Euphrates, which Mr. Macaulay thinks so innocently designed, apparently not aware that he is also laughing at Dante. These larger fosses are of rock, and the bridges also; but as he goes farther into detail, Dante tells us of various minor fosses and embankments, in which he anxiously points out to us not only the formality, but the neatness and perfectness, of the stonework. For instance, in describing the river Phlegethon, he tells us that it was "paved with stone at the bottom,[3] and at the sides, and *over the edges of the sides*," just as the water is at the baths of Bulicame; and for fear we should think this embankment at all *larger* than it really was, Dante adds, carefully, that it was made just like the embankments of Ghent or Bruges against the sea, or those in Lombardy which bank the Brenta, only "not so high, nor so wide," as any of these.

[1] [*Paradise Lost*, ii. 620; *Inferno*, iii. 1–11.]
[2] [*Inferno*, xi. 16 *seq.*, xviii. 1 *seq.*]
[3] [*Inferno*, xiv. 79:—

"Lo fondo suo, ed ambo le pendici
Fatt' eran pietra, e i margini da lato."

In his copy for revision, Ruskin notes that his translation "paved with stones" is "Wrong. Petrified, encrusted with stone. This noble idea (he adds) of Phlegethon *petrifying* is very precious." The other references in § 29 are *Inferno*, xv. 4–12; iv. 106 *seq.*; viii. 68 *seq.* Ecbatana is not Dante's simile, but refers to Herodotus, as cited in the *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 175 and *n.*).]

And besides the trenches, we have two well-built castles; one, like Ecbatana, with seven circuits of wall (and surrounded by a fair stream), wherein the great poets and sages of antiquity live; and another, a great fortified city with walls of iron, red-hot, and a deep fosse round it, and full of "grave citizens,"—the city of Dis.

§ 30. Now, whether this be in what we moderns call "good taste," or not, I do not mean just now to inquire—Dante having nothing to do with taste, but with the facts of what he had seen; only, so far as the imaginative faculty of the two poets is concerned, note that Milton's vagueness is not the sign of imagination, but of its absence, so far as it is significative in the matter. For it does not follow, because Milton did not map out his Inferno as Dante did, that he *could* not have done so if he had chosen; only, it was the easier and less imaginative process to leave it vague than to define it. Imagination is always the seeing and asserting faculty;[1] that which obscures or conceals may be judgment, or feeling, but not invention. The invention, whether good or bad, is in the accurate engineering, not in the fog and uncertainty.

§ 31. When we pass with Dante from the Inferno to Purgatory, we have indeed more light and air, but no more liberty; being now confined on various ledges cut into a mountain side, with a precipice on one hand and a vertical wall on the other; and, lest here also we should make any mistake about magnitudes, we are told that the ledges were eighteen feet wide,* and that the ascent from one to the other was by steps, made like those which go up from Florence to the Church of San Miniato.†

Lastly, though in the Paradise there is perfect freedom and infinity of space, though for trenches we have planets, and for cornices constellations, yet there is more cadence,

* "Three times the length of the human body."—*Purg.* x. 24.

† *Purg.* xii. 102.

[1] [See above, p. 177.]

procession, and order among the redeemed souls than any other; they fly, so as to describe letters and sentences in the air, and rest in circles, like rainbows, or determinate figures, as of a cross and an eagle; in which certain of the more glorified natures are so arranged as to form the eye of the bird, while those most highly blessed are arranged with their white crowds in leaflets, so as to form the image of a white rose in the midst of heaven.[1]

§ 32. Thus, throughout the poem, I conceive that the first striking character of its scenery is intense definition; precisely the reflection of that definiteness which we have already traced in pictorial art. But the second point which seems noteworthy is, that the flat ground and embanked trenches are reserved for the Inferno: and that the entire territory of the Purgatory is a mountain, thus marking the sense of that purifying and perfecting influence in mountains which we saw the mediæval mind was so ready to suggest. The same general idea is indicated at the very commencement of the poem, in which Dante is overwhelmed by fear and sorrow in passing through a dark forest, but revives on seeing the sun touch the top of a hill, afterwards called by Virgil "the pleasant mount—the cause and source of all delight."[2]

§ 33. While, however, we find this greater honour paid to mountains, I think we may perceive a much greater dread and dislike of woods. We saw[3] that Homer seemed to attach a pleasant idea, for the most part, to forests; regarding them as sources of wealth and places of shelter; and we find constantly an idea of sacredness attached to them, as being haunted especially by the gods; so that even the wood which surrounds the house of Circe is spoken of as a sacred thicket,[4] or rather, as a sacred glade, or labyrinth of

[1] [The references to the *Paradiso* are as follow: (letters and sentences) xviii. 70–96; (eagle) 97–114; (cross) xiv. 100 *seq.*; (circles like rainbow) xxviii. 23–33; (eye of bird) xxi. 31–72; (white rose) xxx. 117 *seq.*]

[2] [*Inferno*, i. 77, 78.]

[3] [See above, pp. 240, 241.]

[4] [*Odyssey*, x. 275: ἱερὰς ἀνὰ βήσσας; see below, p. 282.]

glades (of the particular word used I shall have more to say presently); and so the wood is sought as a kindly shelter by Ulysses, in spite of its wild beasts; and evidently regarded with great affection by Sophocles, for, in a passage[1] which is always regarded by readers of Greek tragedy with peculiar pleasure, the aged and blind Œdipus, brought to rest in "the sweetest resting-place" in all the neighbourhood of Athens, has the spot described to him as haunted perpetually by nightingales, which sing "in the green glades and in the dark ivy, and in the thousand-fruited, sunless, and windless thickets of the god" (Bacchus); the idea of the complete shelter from wind and sun being here, as with Ulysses, the uppermost one. After this come the usual staples of landscape,—narcissus, crocus, plenty of rain, olive trees; and last, and the greatest boast of all,—"it is a good country for horses, and conveniently by the sea;" but the prominence and pleasantness of the thick wood in the thoughts of the writer are very notable; whereas to Dante the idea of a forest is exceedingly repulsive, so that, as just noticed, in the opening of his poem, he cannot express a general despair about life more strongly than by saying he was lost in a wood so savage and terrible, that "even to think or speak of it is distress,—it was so bitter,—it was something next door to death;"[2] and one of the saddest scenes in all the Inferno is in a forest, of which the trees are haunted by lost souls: while (with only one exception), whenever the country is to be beautiful, we find ourselves coming out into open air and open meadows.[3]

It is quite true that this is partly a characteristic, not merely of Dante, or of mediæval writers, but of *southern* writers; for the simple reason that the forest, being with them higher upon the hills, and more out of the way than in the north, was generally a type of lonely and savage

[1] [*Œdipus Coloneus*, 668–711.]

[2] [See *Inferno*, i. 1–7. The following reference is to *Inferno*, xiii. 94 *seq.*; the "exception" being the wood in the terrestrial paradise, *Purgatorio*, xxviii. 1 *seq.*, referred to in the next paragraph of the text.]

[3] [See, for example, *Inferno*, iv. 111, 116, 118; *Purgatorio*, xxvii. 98–99.]

places; while in England, the "greenwood," coming up to the very walls of the towns, it was possible to be "merry in the good greenwood,"[1] in a sense which an Italian could not have understood. Hence Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspere send their favourites perpetually to the woods for pleasure or meditation; and trust their tender Canace,[2] or Rosalind, or Helena, or Silvia, or Belphœbe, where Dante would have sent no one but a condemned spirit. Nevertheless, there is always traceable in the mediæval mind a dread of thick foliage, which was not present to that of a Greek; so that, even in the north, we have our sorrowful "children in the wood," and black huntsman of the Hartz forests, and such other wood terrors; the principal reason for the difference being that a Greek, being by no means given to travelling, regarded his woods as so much valuable property; and if he ever went into them for pleasure, expected to meet one or two gods in the course of his walk, but no banditti; while a mediæval, much more of a solitary traveller, and expecting to meet with no gods in the thickets, but only with thieves, or a hostile ambush, or a bear, besides a great deal of troublesome ground for his horse, and a very serious chance, next to a certainty, of losing his way, naturally kept in the open ground as long as he could, and regarded the forests, in general, with anything but an eye of favour.

§ 34. These, I think, are the principal points which must strike us, when we first broadly think of the poem as compared with classical work. Let us now go a little more into detail.

As Homer gave us an ideal landscape, which even a god might have been pleased to behold, so Dante[3] gives us, fortunately, an ideal landscape, which is specially intended for the terrestrial paradise. And it will doubtless be with some surprise, after our reflections above on the

[1] [*Lady of the Lake*, iv. 12.]
[2] [In *The Squire's Tale*.]
[3] [In *Purgatorio*, xxviii., as mentioned on the last page; for Homer's ideal landscape, see p. 234.]

general tone of Dante's feelings, that we find ourselves here first entering a *forest*, and that even a *thick* forest. But there is a peculiar meaning in this. With any other poet than Dante, it might have been regarded as a wanton inconsistency. Not so with him: by glancing back to the two lines which explain the nature of Paradise, we shall see what he means by it. Virgil tells him, as he enters it, "Henceforward, take thine own pleasure for guide; thou art beyond the steep ways, and beyond all Art;"[1]—meaning, that the perfectly purified and noble human creature, having no pleasure but in right, is past all effort, and past all *rule*. Art has no existence for such a being. Hence, the first aim of Dante, in his landscape imagery, is to show evidence of this perfect liberty, and of the purity and sinlessness of the new nature, converting pathless ways into happy ones. So that all those fences and formalisms which had been needed for him in imperfection, are removed in this paradise; and even the pathlessness of the wood, the most dreadful thing possible to him in his days of sin and shortcoming, is now a joy to him in his days of purity. And as the fencelessness and thicket of sin led to the fettered and fearful order of eternal punishment, so the fencelessness and thicket of the free virtue lead to the loving and constellated order of eternal happiness.

§ 35. This forest, then, is very like that of Colonos in several respects—in its peace and sweetness, and number of birds; it differs from it only in letting a light breeze through it, being therefore somewhat thinner than the Greek wood; the tender lines which tell of the voices of the birds mingling with the wind, and of the leaves all turning one way before it, have been more or less copied by every poet since Dante's time. They are, so far as I

[1] [*Purgatorio*, xxvii. 130: "Fuor se' dell' erte vie, fuor se' dell' arte." Ruskin, however, mis-translates the line, the last word of which is the adjective "narrow," and not the substantive "art": thus Cary: "Thou hast o'ercome the steeper way, O'ercome the straiter."]

know, the sweetest passage of wood description which exists in literature.[1]

Before, however, Dante has gone far in this wood,—that is to say, only so far as to have lost sight of the place where he entered it, or rather, I suppose, of the light under the boughs of the outside trees, and it must have been a very thin wood indeed if he did not do this in some quarter of a mile's walk,—he comes to a little river,[2] three paces over, which bends the blades of grass to the left, with a meadow on the other side of it; and in this meadow

"A lady, graced with solitude, who went
Singing, and setting flower by flower apart,
By which the path she walked on was besprent.
'Ah, lady beautiful, that basking art
In beams of love, if I may trust thy face,
Which useth to bear witness of the heart,
Let liking come on thee,' said I, 'to trace
Thy path a little closer to the shore,
Where I may reap the hearing of thy lays.
Thou mindest me, how Proserpine of yore
Appeared in such a place, what time her mother
Lost her, and she the spring, for evermore.'
As, pointing downwards and to one another
Her feet, a lady bendeth in the dance,
And barely setteth one before the other,
Thus, on the scarlet and the saffron glance
Of flowers, with motion maidenlike she bent
(Her modest eyelids drooping and askance);
And there she gave my wishes their content,
Approaching, so that her sweet melodies
Arrived upon mine ear with what they meant.
When first she came amongst the blades, that rise,
Already wetted, from the goodly river,
She graced me by the lifting of her eyes."—CAYLEY.[3]

§ 36. I have given this passage at length, because, for our purposes, it is by much the most important, not only in Dante, but in the whole circle of poetry. This lady, observe, stands on the opposite side of the little stream, which, presently, she explains to Dante is Lethe, having power to cause forgetfulness of all evil, and she stands just

[1] [*Purgatorio*, xxviii., the opening lines.]
[2] [See *ibid.*, 22 *seq.*]
[3] [*Ibid.*, 40–63.]

among the bent blades of grass at its edge. She is first seen gathering flower from flower, then "passing continually the multitudinous flowers through her hands,"[1] smiling at the same time so brightly, that her first address to Dante is to prevent him from wondering at her, saying, "if he will remember the verse of the ninety-second Psalm, beginning 'Delectasti,' he will know why she is so happy."[2]

And turning to the verse of this Psalm we find it written, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad *through Thy works.* I will triumph *in the works of Thy hands;*" or in the very words in which Dante would read it,—

> "Quia delectasti me, Domine, in factura Tua,
> Et in operibus manuum Tuarum exultabo."

§ 37. Now we could not for an instant have had any difficulty in understanding this, but that, some way farther on in the poem, this lady is called Matilda, and is with reason supposed by the commentators to be the great Countess Matilda of the eleventh century; notable equally for her ceaseless activity, her brilliant political genius, her perfect piety, and her deep reverence for the see of Rome.[3] This Countess Matilda is therefore Dante's guide in the terrestrial paradise, as Beatrice is afterwards in the celestial; each of them having a spiritual and symbolic character in their glorified state, yet retaining their definite personality.

The question is, then, what is the symbolic character of the Countess Matilda, as the guiding spirit of the terrestrial paradise? Before Dante had entered this paradise he had rested on a step of shelving rock, and as he watched the stars he slept, and dreamed, and thus tells us what he saw:—

> "A lady, young and beautiful, I dreamed,
> Was passing o'er a lea; and, as she came,
> Methought I saw her ever and anon
> Bending to cull the flowers; and thus she sang:
> 'Know ye, whoever of my name would ask,

[1] [*Purgatorio*, xxviii. 68, 69.]
[2] [*Ibid.*, 80, 81.]
[3] [For another reference to the Countess Matilda of Tuscany (1046–1114), see *Val d'Arno*, § 20.]

That I am Leah; for my brow to weave
A garland, these fair hands unwearied ply;
To please me at the crystal mirror, here
I decked me. But my sister Rachel, she
Before her glass abides the livelong day,
Her radiant eyes beholding, charmed no less
Than I with this delightful task. Her joy
In contemplation, as in labour mine.'" [1]

This vision of Rachel and Leah has been always, and with unquestionable truth, received as a type of the Active and Contemplative life, and as an introduction to the two divisions of the paradise which Dante is about to enter. Therefore the unwearied spirit of the Countess Matilda is understood to represent the Active life, which forms the felicity of Earth; and the spirit of Beatrice the Contemplative life, which forms the felicity of Heaven. This interpretation appears at first straightforward and certain; but it has missed count of exactly the most important fact in the two passages which we have to explain. Observe: Leah gathers the flowers to decorate *herself*, and delights in *Her Own* Labour. Rachel sits silent, contemplating herself, and delights in *Her Own* Image. These are the types of the Unglorified Active and Contemplative powers of Man. But Beatrice and Matilda are the same powers, Glorified. And how are they Glorified? Leah took delight in her own labour; but Matilda—"in operibus *manuum Tuarum*"—*in God's labour:* Rachel in the sight of her own face; Beatrice in the sight of *God's face.*

§ 38. And thus, when afterwards Dante sees Beatrice on her throne, and prays her that, when he himself shall die, she would receive him with kindness, Beatrice merely looks down for an instant, and answers with a single smile, then "towards the eternal fountain turns." [2]

Therefore it is evident that Dante distinguishes in both cases, not between earth and heaven, but between perfect and imperfect happiness, whether in earth or heaven. The active life which has only the service of man for its end,

[1] [*Purgatorio*, xxvii. 97–110. The translation here is Cary's.]
[2] [*Paradiso*, xxxi. 93 (Cary).]

and therefore gathers flowers, with Leah, for its own decoration, is indeed happy, but not perfectly so; it has only the happiness of the dream, belonging essentially to the dream of human life, and passing away with it. But the active life which labours for the more and more discovery of God's work, is perfectly happy, and is the life of the terrestrial paradise, being a true foretaste of heaven, and beginning in earth, as heaven's vestibule. So also the contemplative life which is concerned with human feeling and thought and beauty—the life which is in earthly poetry and imagery of noble earthly emotion—is happy, but it is the happiness of the dream; the contemplative life which has God's person and love in Christ for its object, has the happiness of eternity. But because this higher happiness is also begun here on earth, Beatrice descends to earth; and when revealed to Dante first, he sees the image of the twofold personality of Christ reflected in her *eyes;*[1] as the flowers, which are, to the mediæval heart, the chief work of God, are for ever passing through Matilda's *hands.*

§ 39. Now, therefore, we see that Dante, as the great prophetic exponent of the heart of the Middle Ages, has, by the lips of the spirit of Matilda, declared the mediæval faith,—that all perfect active life was "the expression of man's delight *in God's work;*"[2] and that all their political and warlike energy, as fully shown in the mortal life of Matilda, was yet inferior and impure,—the energy of the dream,—compared with that which on the opposite bank of Lethe stood "choosing flower from flower."[3] And what joy and peace there were in this work is marked by Matilda's being the person who draws Dante through the stream of Lethe, so as to make him forget all sin, and all sorrow; throwing her arms around him, she plunges his head under the waves of it; then draws him through, crying to him, "*hold me, hold me*" (tiemmi, tiemmi),[4] and so presents him,

[1] [*Purgatorio,* xxxi. 118–123.]
[2] [See *Stones of Venice,* vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 264), and *Purgatorio,* xxvii. 108.]
[3] [See above, p. 276; *Purgatorio,* xxviii. 41.]
[4] [*Purgatorio,* xxxi. 92; and see *Sesame and Lilies,* § 94.]

thus bathed, free from all painful memory, at the feet of the spirit of the more heavenly contemplation.

§ 40. The reader will, I think, now see, with sufficient distinctness, why I called this passage the most important, for our present purposes, in the whole circle of poetry. For it contains the first great confession of the discovery by the human race (I mean as a matter of experience, not of revelation), that their happiness was not in themselves, and that their labour was not to have their own service as its chief end. It embodies in a few syllables the *sealing* difference between the Greek and the mediæval, in that the former sought the flower and herb for his own uses, the latter for God's honour; the former, primarily and on principle, contemplated his own beauty and the workings of his own mind, and the latter, primarily and on principle, contemplated Christ's beauty and the workings of the mind of Christ.[1]

§ 41. I will not at present follow up this subject any farther; it being enough that we have thus got to the root of it, and have a great declaration of the central mediæval purpose, whereto we may return for solution of all future questions. I would only, therefore, desire the reader now to compare the *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. chap. xx. §§ 15, 16; the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, chap. iv. § 3; and the second volume of this work, Sec. I. Chap. II. §§ 9, 10, and Chap. III. § 10;[2] that he may, in these several places, observe how gradually our conclusions are knitting themselves together as we are able to determine more and more of the successive questions that come before us: and, finally, to compare the two interesting passages in Wordsworth, which, without any memory of Dante, nevertheless, as if

[1] [There is an apparent contradiction between this § 40 and § 7 above. Here it is stated that by the Greek the flower and herb were sought for his own uses, and by the mediæval for God's honour; but above (§ 7 and § 15), it is stated that the Greek associated the flower and herb directly with the Divine gift, whereas the mediæval regarded them with a less solemn sense of that gift. In a reply to a correspondent, Ruskin cleared up the difficulty: see the letter given in Appendix iv., below, p. 431.]

[2] [The references in this edition are Vol. IX. p. 264; Vol. VIII. p. 142; Vol. IV. p. 50.]

by some special ordaining, describe in matters of modern life exactly the soothing or felicitous powers of the two active spirits of Dante—Leah and Matilda, *Excursion*, book v. line 608 to 625, and book vi. line 102 to 214.

§ 42. Having thus received from Dante this great lesson, as to the spirit in which mediæval landscape is to be understood, what else we have to note respecting it, as seen in his poem, will be comparatively straightforward and easy. And first, we have to observe the place occupied in his mind by *colour*. It has already been shown, in the *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. chap. v. §§ 30–34, that colour is the most *sacred* element of all visible things.[1] Hence, as the mediæval mind contemplated them first for their sacredness, we should, beforehand, expect that the first thing it would seize would be the colour; and that we should find its expressions and renderings of colour infinitely more loving and accurate than among the Greeks.

§ 43. Accordingly, the Greek sense of colour seems to have been so comparatively dim and uncertain, that it is almost impossible to ascertain what the real idea was which they attached to any word alluding to hue: and above all, colour, though pleasant to their eyes, as to those of all human beings, seems never to have been impressive to their feelings. They liked purple, on the whole, the best;[2] but there was no sense of cheerfulness or pleasantness in one colour, and gloom in another, such as the mediævals had.

For instance, when Achilles goes, in great anger and sorrow, to complain to Thetis of the scorn done him by Agamemnon, the sea appears to him "wine-coloured."[3] One might think this meant that the sea looked dark and reddish-purple to him, in a kind of sympathy with his anger. But we turn to the passage of Sophocles, which has been quoted above,—a passage peculiarly intended to express peace and rest,—and we find that the birds sing

[1] [See also *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. iii. § 23.]

[2] [Compare "Lectures on Colour," § 33, Vol. XII. p. 504; and *Queen of the Air*, §§ 91, 95.]

[3] [*Iliad*, i. 350, οἶνοπα πόντον (*v. l.* ἀπείρονα).]

among "wine-coloured" ivy.[1] The uncertainty of conception of the hue itself, and entire absence of expressive character in the word, could hardly be more clearly manifested.

§ 44. Again: I said the Greek liked purple, as a general source of enjoyment, better than any other colour.[2] So he did; and so all healthy persons who have eye for colour, and are unprejudiced about it, do; and will to the end of time, for a reason presently to be noted.[3] But so far was this instinctive preference for purple from giving, in the Greek mind, any consistently cheerful or sacred association to the colour, that Homer constantly calls death "purple death."[4]

§ 45. Again: in the passage of Sophocles, so often spoken of, I said there was some difficulty respecting a word often translated "thickets." I believe, myself, it means glades; literally, "going places" in the woods,—that is to say, places where, either naturally or by force, the trees separate, so as to give some accessible avenue. Now, Sophocles tells us the birds sang in these "*green* going places;"[5] and we take up the expression gratefully, thinking the old Greek perceived and enjoyed, as we do, the sweet fall of the eminently *green* light through the leaves when they are a little thinner than in the heart of the wood. But we turn to the tragedy of Ajax, and are much shaken in our conclusion about the meaning of the word, when we are told that the body of Ajax is to lie unburied, and be eaten by sea-birds on the "*green* sand." The formation, geologically distinguished by that title, was certainly not known to Sophocles; and the only conclusion which, it seems to me, we can come to under the circumstances,—assuming Ariel's *

* "Come unto these *yellow* sands."[6]

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[1] [τὸν οἰνῶπ' ἀνέχουσα κισσὸν, *Œdipus Coloneus*, 674.]

[2] [See above, p. 273, and compare "Lectures on Colour," § 38, Vol. XII. p. 505.]

[3] [See in the next volume, p. 69 (purple as an element in "the sacred chord of colour"), and pp. 140, 421 (prevalence of purple in natural scenery).]

[4] [See, for instance, *Iliad*, v. 83; and compare the note in Vol. XII. p. 504.]

[5] [*Œdipus Coloneus*, 673: χλωραῖς ὑπὸ βάσσαις; and below, the reference is to the *Ajax*, 1064: ἀμφὶ χλωρὰν ψάμαθον.]

[6] [See *Munera Pulveris*, § 134, where the same passage from the *Tempest* (i. 2) is cited in another connexion.]

authority as to the colour of pretty sand, and the Ancient Mariner's (or rather, his hearers'*) as to the colour of ugly sand, to be conclusive,—is that Sophocles really did not know green from yellow or brown.

§ 46. Now, without going out of the terrestrial paradise, in which Dante last left us, we shall be able at once to compare with this Greek incertitude the precision of the mediæval eye for colour. Some three arrowflights farther up into the wood we come to a tall tree, which is at first barren, but, after some little time, visibly opens into flowers, of a colour "less than that of roses, but more than that of violets."[1]

It certainly would not be possible, in words, to come nearer to the *definition* of the exact hue which Dante meant —that of the apple-blossom. Had he employed any simple colour-phrase, as a "pale-pink," or "violet-pink," or any other such combined expression, he still could not have completely got at the delicacy of the hue; he might perhaps have indicated its kind, but not its tenderness; but by taking the rose-leaf as a type of the delicate red, and then enfeebling this with the violet grey, he gets, as closely as language can carry him, to the complete rendering of the vision, though it is evidently felt by him to be in its perfect beauty ineffable; and rightly so felt, for of all lovely things which grace the spring-time in our fair temperate zone, I am not sure but this blossoming of the apple-tree is the fairest. At all events, I find it associated in my mind with four other kinds of colour, certainly principal among the gifts of the northern earth, namely:

1st. Bell gentians growing close together, mixed with lilies of the valley, on the Jura pastures.

2nd. Alpine roses with dew upon them, under low rays of morning sunshine, touching the tops of the flowers.

* "And thou art long, and lank, and *brown*,
As is the ribbed sea sand."

[1] [*Purgatorio*, xxxii. 58.]

3rd. Bell heather in mass, in full light, at sunset.
4th. White narcissus (red-centred) in mass, on the Vevay pastures, in sunshine after rain.

And I know not where in the group to place the wreaths of apple-blossom, in the Vevay orchards, with the far-off blue of the lake of Geneva seen between the flowers.

A Greek, however, would have regarded this blossom simply with the eyes of a Devonshire farmer, as bearing on the probable price of cider, and would have called it red, cerulean, purple, white, hyacinthine, or generally "aglaos," agreeable, as happened to suit his verse.

§ 47. Again: we have seen how fond the Greek was of composing his paradises of rather damp grass;[1] but that in this fondness for grass there was always an undercurrent of consideration for his horses; and the characters in it which pleased him most were its depth and freshness; not its colour. Now, if we remember carefully the general expressions, respecting grass, used in modern literature, I think nearly the commonest that occurs to us will be that of "enamelled" turf or sward. This phrase is usually employed by our pseudo-poets, like all their other phrases, without knowing what it means, because it has been used by other writers before them,[2] and because they do not know what else to say of grass. If we were to ask them what enamel was, they could not tell us; and if we asked why grass was like enamel, they could not tell us. The expression *has* a meaning, however, and one peculiarly characteristic of mediæval and modern temper.

§ 48. The first instance I know of its right use, though very probably it had been so employed before, is in Dante. The righteous spirits of the pre-Christian ages are seen by him, though in the Inferno, yet in a place open, luminous, and high, walking upon the "green enamel."[3]

[1] [See above, p. 242.]
[2] [First by Milton, "O'er the smooth enamelled green": *Arcades.*]
[3] [*Inferno,* iv. 118: "sopra 'l verde smalto."]

I am very sure that Dante did not use this phrase as we use it. He knew well what enamel was; and his readers, in order to understand him thoroughly, must remember what it is,—a vitreous paste, dissolved in water, mixed with metallic oxides, to give it the opacity and the colour required, spread in a moist state on metal, and afterwards hardened by fire, so as never to change. And Dante means, in using this metaphor of the grass of the Inferno, to mark, that it is laid as a tempering and cooling substance over the dark, metallic, gloomy ground; but yet so hardened by the fire, that it is not any more fresh or living grass, but a smooth, silent, lifeless bed of eternal green. And we know how *hard* Dante's idea of it was; because afterwards, in what is perhaps the most awful passage of the whole Inferno, when the three furies rise at the top of the burning tower, and catching sight of Dante, and not being able to get at him, shriek wildly for the Gorgon to come up too, that they may turn him into stone,—the word *stone* is not hard enough for them. Stone might crumble away after it was made, or something with life might grow upon it; no, it shall not be stone; they will make enamel of him; nothing can grow out of that; it is dead for ever.*

"Venga Medusa, sì lo farem di *Smalto*."[1]

§ 49. Now, almost in the opening of the Purgatory, as there at the entrance of the Inferno, we find a company of great ones resting in a grassy place. But the idea of the grass now is very different. The word now used is not "enamel," but "herb," and instead of being merely green, it is covered with flowers of many colours.[2] With the usual mediæval accuracy, Dante insists on telling us precisely what these colours were, and how bright; which he

* Compare parallel passage, making Dante hard or changeless in good, *Purg.* viii. 114.

[1] [*Inferno*, ix. 53; quoted also at Vol. XI. p. 169, and in *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 24.]
[2] [*Purgatorio*, vii. 73–76.]

does by naming the actual pigments used in illumination,—"Gold, and fine silver, and cochineal, and white lead, and Indian wood, serene and lucid, and fresh emerald, just broken, would have been excelled, as less is by greater, by the flowers and grass of the place." It is evident that the "emerald" here means the emerald green of the illuminators; for a fresh emerald is no brighter than one which is not fresh, and Dante was not one to throw away his words thus.[1] Observe then, we have here the idea of the growth, life, and variegation of the "green herb," as opposed to the "smalto" of the Inferno; but the colours of the variegation are illustrated and defined by the reference to actual pigments: and, observe, because the other colours are rather bright, the blue ground (Indian wood, indigo?) is sober; lucid, but serene: and presently two angels enter, who are dressed in green drapery, but of a paler green than the grass, which Dante marks, by telling us that it was "the green of leaves, just budded."[2]

§ 50. In all this, I wish the reader to observe two things: first, the general carefulness of the poet in defining colour, distinguishing it precisely as a painter would (opposed to the Greek carelessness about it); and, secondly, his regarding the grass for its greenness and variegation, rather than, as a Greek would have done, for its depth and freshness. This greenness or brightness, and variegation, are taken up by later and modern poets, as the things intended to be chiefly expressed by the word "enamelled"; and, gradually, the term is taken to indicate any kind of bright and interchangeable colouring; there being always this much of propriety about it, when used of greensward, that such sward is indeed, like enamel, a coat of bright colour on a comparatively dark ground; and is thus a sort of natural jewellery and painter's work, different from loose and large vegetation. The word is often awkwardly and falsely used,

[1] [On the subject of Dante's definiteness in colour-notes, compare "Lectures on Colour," § 5, Vol. XII. pp. 478–479.]

[2] [*Purgatorio*, viii. 28.]

by the later poets, of all kinds of growth and colour; as by Milton of the flowers of Paradise showing themselves over its wall;[1] but it retains, nevertheless, through all its jaded manity, some half-unconscious vestige of the old sense, even to the present day.

§ 51. There are, it seems to me, several important deductions to be made from these facts. The Greek, we have seen, delighted in the grass for its usefulness; the mediæval, as also we moderns, for its colour and beauty. But both dwell on it as the *first* element of the lovely landscape; we saw its use in Homer,[2] we see also that Dante thinks the righteous spirits of the heathen enough comforted in Hades by having even the *image* of green grass put beneath their feet; the happy resting-place in Purgatory has no other delight than its grass and flowers; and, finally, in the terrestrial paradise, the feet of Matilda pause where the Lethe stream first bends the blades of grass. Consider a little what a depth there is in this great instinct of the human race. Gather a single blade of grass, and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point,—not a perfect point neither, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared-for example of Nature's workmanship; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven;[3] and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes or good for food,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine,—there be any by man so deeply loved, by

[1] [*Paradise Lost*, iv. 149.]
[2] [For the Homeric meadows, see above, pp. 234, 239; for the Dante reference, *Inferno*, iv. 118.]
[3] [Luke xii. 28.]

God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green It seems to me not to have been without a peculiar signifi cance, that our Lord, when about to work the miracl which, of all that He showed, appears to have been felt b the multitude as the most impressive,—the miracle of th loaves,—commanded the people to sit down by companie "upon the green grass."[1] He was about to feed them witl the principal produce of earth and the sea, the simplest re presentations of the food of mankind. He gave them th *seed* of the herb; He bade them sit down upon the herl itself, which was as great a gift, in its fitness for their joy and rest, as its perfect fruit, for their sustenance; thus, i this single order and act, when rightly understood, indicat ing for evermore how the Creator had entrusted the comfort consolation, and sustenance of man, to the simplest an most despised of all the leafy families of the earth. An well does it fulfil its mission. Consider what we ow merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of thos soft, and countless, and peaceful spears. The fields! Follow but forth for a little time the thoughts of all that we ought to recognize in those words. All spring and summer is in them,—the walks by silent, scented paths,—the rests in noonday heat,—the joy of herds and flocks,—the power o all shepherd life and meditation,—the life of sunlight upon the world, falling in emerald streaks, and failing in soft blue shadows, where else it would have struck upon the dark mould, or scorching dust,—pastures beside the pacing brooks,—soft banks and knolls of lowly hills,—thymy slopes of down overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea,—crisp lawns all dim with early dew, or smooth in evening warmth of barred sunshine, dinted by happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices; all these are summed in those simple words; and these are not all. We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly gift in our

[1] [Mark vi. 39.]

own land; though still, as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness, Shakspere's peculiar joy,[1] would open on us more and more, yet we have it but in part. Go out, in the spring-time, among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free; and as you follow the winding mountain paths, beneath arching boughs all veiled and dim with blossom,—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation, steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new-mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness,—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines; and we may, perhaps, at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th Psalm, "He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains."[2]

§ 52. There are also several lessons symbolically connected with this subject, which we must not allow to escape us. Observe, the peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility*, and *cheerfulness*. Its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on, and fed upon. Its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger the next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with variegated flame of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful strength.

[1] [See, for instance, Sonnet xxxiii. (of the sun): "Kissing with golden face the meadows green"; and the song at the end of *Love's Labour's Lost:* "And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue Do paint the meadows with delight."]

[2] [The first thought of this passage (§ 51) came to Ruskin at Vevay in 1849; see the passage from his diary quoted in the Introduction above, p. xviii. The last sentences of § 51 are quoted by Matthew Arnold in his essay on "The Literary Influence of Academies" (*Essays in Criticism*).]

Winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless and leafless as they. It is always green and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar-frost.

§ 53. Now, these two characters—of humility, and joy under trial—are exactly those which most definitely distinguish the Christian from the Pagan spirit. Whatever virtue the pagan possessed was rooted in pride, and fruited with sorrow. It began in the elevation of his own nature; it ended but in the "verde smalto"—the hopeless green—of the Elysian fields. But the Christian virtue is rooted in self-debasement, and strengthened under suffering by gladness of hope. And remembering this, it is curious to observe how utterly without gladness the Greek heart appears to be in watching the flowering grass, and what strange discords of expression arise sometimes in consequence. There is one, recurring once or twice in Homer, which has always pained me. He says, "The Greek army was on the fields, as thick as flowers in the spring."[1] It might be so; but flowers in spring-time are not the image by which Dante would have numbered soldiers on their path of battle. Dante could not have thought of the flowering of the grass but as associated with happiness. There is a still deeper significance in the passage quoted, a little while ago,[2] from Homer, describing Ulysses casting himself down on the *rushes* and the corn-giving land at the river shore,—the rushes and corn being to him only good for rest and sustenance,—when we compare it with that in which Dante tells us he was ordered to descend to the shore of the lake as he entered Purgatory, to gather a *rush*, and gird himself with it, it being to him the emblem not only of rest, but of humility under chastisement, the rush (or reed) being the only plant which can grow there;—"no

[1] [*Iliad*, ii. 468:—

ἔσταν δ' ἐν λειμῶνι Σκαμανδρίῳ ἀνθεμόεντι
μυρίοι, ὅσσα τε φύλλα καὶ ἄνθεα γίγνεται ὥρῃ.]

[2] [See above, p. 239.]

plant which bears leaves, or hardens its bark, can live on that shore, because it does not yield to the chastisement of its waves."[1] It cannot but strike the reader singularly how deep and harmonious a significance runs through all these words of Dante—how every syllable of them, the more we penetrate it, becomes a seed of farther thought! For, follow up this image of the girding with the reed, under trial, and see to whose feet it will lead us. As the grass of the earth, thought of as the herb yielding seed, leads us to the place where our Lord commanded the multitude to sit down by companies upon the green grass; so the grass of the waters, thought of as sustaining itself among the waters of affliction, leads us to the place where a stem of it was put into our Lord's hand for His sceptre; and in the crown of thorns, and the rod of reed,[2] was foreshown the everlasting truth of the Christian ages—that all glory was to be begun in suffering, and all power in humility.

Assembling the images we have traced, and adding the simplest of all, from Isaiah xl. 6, we find, the grass and flowers are types, in their passing, of the passing of human life, and, in their excellence, of the excellence of human life; and this in twofold way; first, by their Beneficence, and then, by their Endurance;—the grass of the earth, in giving the seed of corn, and in its beauty under tread of foot and stroke of scythe; and the grass of the waters, in giving its freshness to our rest, and in its bending before the wave.* But understood in the broad human and Divine sense, the "*herb* yielding seed" (as opposed to the fruit-tree yielding fruit) includes a third family of plants, and fulfils a third office to the human race. It includes the

* So also in Isa. xxxv. 7, the prevalence of righteousness and peace over all evil is thus foretold:

"In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be *grass*, with *reeds* and *rushes*."

[1] [*Purgatorio*, i. 105.]
[2] [Matthew xxvii. 29, 48.]

great family of the lints and flaxes, and fulfils thus the *three* offices of giving food, raiment, and rest. Follow out this fulfilment; consider the association of the linen garment and the linen embroidery, with the priestly office, and the furniture of the Tabernacle; and consider how the rush has been, in all time, the first natural carpet thrown under the human foot. Then next observe the three virtues definitely set forth by the three families of plants; not arbitrarily or fancifully associated with them, but in all the three cases marked for us by Scriptural words:

1st. Cheerfulness, or joyful serenity; in the grass for food and beauty.—"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin."

2nd. Humility; in the grass for rest.—"A bruised reed shall He not break."

3rd. Love; in the grass for clothing (because of its swift kindling).—"The smoking flax shall He not quench."

And then, finally, observe the confirmation of these last two images in, I suppose, the most important prophecy, relating to the future state of the Christian Church, which occurs in the Old Testament, namely, that contained in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. The measures of the Temple of God are to be taken; and because it is only by charity and humility that those measures ever can be taken, the angel has "a line of *flax* in his hand, and a measuring *reed*."[1] The use of the line was to measure the land, and of the reed to take the dimensions of the buildings; so the buildings of the church, or its labours, are to be measured by *humility*, and its territory or land, by *love*.

The limits of the Church have, indeed, in later days, been measured, to the world's sorrow, by another kind of flaxen line, burning with the fire of unholy zeal, not with that of Christian charity; and perhaps the best lesson which we can finally take to ourselves, in leaving these sweet

[1] [The references are Genesis i. 11; Matthew vi. 28; Isaiah xlii. 3; Matthew xii. 20; Ezekiel xl. 3.]

fancifully ~~obscure~~ – but in all the three cases – marked for us by scriptural words.

1st: Cheerfulness – ~~with the~~ joyful serenity – in the Grass for food & beauty.

Consider the lilies of the field – how they grow – they toil not – neither do they spin –

2nd: Humility – ~~with~~ in the Grass for rest.

A bruised reed shall not be break.

3rd: ~~Charity~~ Love – in ~~with~~ the Grass for clothing –

The Smoking Flax shall not be quench.

And then – ~~we shall see the meaning of and come~~ I think finally – observe the confirmation of these last two images in I suppose the most important prophecy relating to the Future state of the Christian church which occurs in the old Testament – ~~namely~~ namely that contained in the closing chapters of ~~the book~~ of Ezekiel – The measures of the temple of God are to be taken; ~~therein~~ – and because it is only by Charity

The limits of the church have indeed in their day, been measured to the worlds sorrow by another kind of Flaxen line, burning with the fire of unholy zeal — not with that of Christian charity: and perhaps the last & best lesson which we may many take to ourselves — in leaving these sweet fields of the mediaeval landscape — is the memory that in spite of all the fenced & feltered habits of thought of his age — this great Dante — this inspired exponent of what long

* Lowth

deepest at the heart of the early church, placed his terrestrial Paradise when there had ceased to be fence or division — and when the Grass of the earth was bent & bowed down in unity of direction, only by the soft waves that bore with them the Forgetfulness of Evil

A Page of the MS. of "Modern Painters," Vol. III. (Chapter XIV. § 53)

pp. 292–293

fields of the mediæval landscape, is the memory that, in spite of all the fettered habits of thought of his age, this great Dante, this inspired exponent of what lay deepest at the heart of the early Church, placed his terrestrial paradise where there had ceased to be fence or division, and where the grass of the earth was bowed down, in unity of direction, only by the soft waves that bore with them the forgetfulness of evil.

CHAPTER XV

OF MEDIÆVAL LANDSCAPE:—SECONDLY, THE ROCKS

§ 1. I CLOSED the last chapter, not because our subject was exhausted, but to give the reader breathing time, and because I supposed he would hardly care to turn back suddenly from the subjects of thought last suggested, to the less pregnant matters of inquiry connected with mediæval landscape. Nor was the pause mistimed even as respects the order of our subjects; for hitherto we have been arrested chiefly by the beauty of the pastures and fields, and have followed the mediæval mind in its fond regard of leaf and flower. But now we have some hard hill-climbing to do; and the remainder of our investigation must be carried on, for the most part, on hands and knees, so that it is not ill done of us first to take breath.

§ 2. It will be remembered that in the last chapter, § 14, we supposed it probable that there would be considerable inaccuracies, in the mediæval mode of regarding nature. Hitherto, however, we have found none but, on the contrary, intense accuracy, precision, and affection. The reason of this is, that all floral and foliaged beauty might be perfectly represented, as far as its form went, in the sculpture and ornamental painting of the period; hence the attention of men was thoroughly awakened to that beauty. But as mountains and clouds and large features of natural scenery could not be accurately represented, we must be prepared to find them not so carefully contemplated,—more carefully, indeed, than by the Greeks, but still in no wise as the things themselves deserve.

§ 3. It was besides noticed[1] that mountains, though regarded with reverence by the mediæval, were also the

[1] [See above, ch. xiv. §§ 2, 10, pp. 249, 253.]

subjects of a certain dislike and dread. And we have seen already[1] that in fact the place of the soul's purification, though a mountain, is yet by Dante subdued, whenever there is any pleasantness to be found upon it, from all mountainous character into grassy recesses, or slopes to rushy shore; and, in his general conception of it, resembles much more a castle mound, surrounded by terraced walks, —in the manner, for instance, of one of Turner's favourite scenes, the bank under Richmond Castle (Yorkshire); or, still more, one of the hill slopes divided by terraces, above the Rhine, in which the picturesqueness of the ground had been reduced to the form best calculated for the growing of costly wine, than any scene to which we moderns should naturally attach the term "Mountainous." On the other hand, although the Inferno is just as accurately measured and divided as the Purgatory, it is nevertheless cleft into rocky chasms which possess something of true mountain nature—nature which we moderns of the north should most of us seek with delight, but which, to the great Florentine, appeared adapted only for the punishment of lost spirits, and which, on the mind of nearly all his countrymen, would to this day produce a very closely correspondent effect; so that their graceful language, dying away on the north side of the Alps, gives its departing accents to proclaim its detestation of hardness and ruggedness; and is heard for the last time, as it bestows on the noblest defile in all the Grisons, if not in all the Alpine chain,[2] the name of the "*evil* way"—"la Via Mala."

§ 4. This "evil way," though much deeper and more sublime, corresponds closely in general character to Dante's "Evilpits,"[3] just as the banks of Richmond do to his mountain of Purgatory; and it is notable that Turner has been led to illustrate, with his whole strength, the character of both; having founded, as it seems to me, his early dreams

[1] [See above, pp. 272, 285, 290.]

[2] [So in *Præterita*, i. ch. vi. § 136, Ruskin calls the Via Mala "the grandest pass of the Alps." For his "placing" of some other passes, see *ibid.*, ii. ch. vii. § 131.]

[3] [Malebolge, *Inferno*, xviii. 2.]

of mountain form altogether on the sweet banks of the Yorkshire streams,[1] and rooted his hardier thoughts of it in the rugged clefts of the Via Mala.

§ 5. Nor of the Via Mala only: a correspondent defile on the St. Gothard,—so terrible in one part of it, that it can, indeed, suggest no ideas but those of horror to minds either of northern or southern temper, and whose wild bridge, cast from rock to rock over a chasm as utterly hopeless and escapeless as any into which Dante gazed from the arches of Malebolge, has been, therefore, ascribed both by northern and southern lips to the master-building of the great spirit of evil,—supplied to Turner the elements of his most terrible thoughts in mountain vision, even to the close of his life. The noblest plate in the series of the Liber Studiorum,* one engraved by his own hand, is of that bridge; the last mountain journey he ever took was up the defile; and a rocky bank and arch, in the last mountain drawing which he ever executed with his perfect power, are remembrances of the path by which he had traversed in his youth this Malebolge of the St. Gothard.[2]

§ 6. It is therefore with peculiar interest, as bearing on our own proper subject, that we must examine Dante's conception of the rocks of the eighth circle. And first, as to general tone of colour: from what we have seen of the love of the mediæval for bright and variegated colour, we might guess that his chief cause of dislike to rocks would be, in Italy, their comparative colourlessness. With hardly an exception, the range of the Apennines is composed of a

* It is an unpublished plate. I know only two impressions of it.[3]

[1] [See on this subject, *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 233); vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 300); and *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 36 (Vol. XII. p. 371).]

[2] [Turner's "last mountain journey" was at some time between 1840 and 1845; see Ruskin's Epilogue to the *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*. "The last mountain drawing" is the "Pass of Faido," analysed in the next volume (ch. ii.); and see ch. xvii. § 24): compare *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 30 *n.*]

[3] [The "Swiss Bridge, Mont St. Gothard," called also "Via Mala." The drawing was in the collection of C. S. Bale. Of the very rare engraver's proofs, one was in Ruskin's possession: see *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 73.]

stone of which some special account is given hereafter in the chapters on Materials of Mountains,[1] and of which one peculiarity, there noticed, is its monotony of hue. Our slates and granites are often of very lovely colours; but the Apennine limestone is so grey and toneless, that I know not any mountain districts so utterly melancholy as those which are composed of this rock, when unwooded. Now, as far as I can discover from the internal evidence in his poem, nearly all Dante's mountain wanderings had been upon this ground. He had journeyed once or twice among the Alps, indeed, but seems to have been impressed chiefly by the road from Garda to Trent, and that along the Cornice, both of which are either upon those limestones, or a dark serpentine, which shows hardly any colour till it is polished. It is not ascertainable that he had ever seen rock scenery of the finely coloured kind, aided by the Alpine mosses: I do not know the fall at Forli (*Inferno*, xvi. 99), but every other scene to which he alludes is among these Apennine limestones; and when he wishes to give the idea of enormous mountain size, he names Tabernicch and Pietra-pana,—the one clearly chosen only for the sake of the last syllable of its name, in order to make a sound as of cracking ice, with the two sequent rhymes of the stanza,—and the other is an Apennine near Lucca.[2]

§ 7. His idea, therefore, of rock colour, founded on these experiences, is that of a dull or ashen grey, more or less stained by the brown of iron ochre, precisely as the Apennine limestones nearly always are; the grey being peculiarly cold and disagreeable. As we go down the very hill which stretches out from Pietra-pana towards Lucca, the stones

[1] [See next volume, ch. xi. § 6.]

[2] [*Inferno*, xxxii. 28 :—

"Non fece al corso suo sì grosso velo
Di verno la Danoia in Ostericchi,
Nè 'l Tanai là sotto 'l freddo cielo,
Com' era quivi; chè' se Tabernicchi
Vi fosse su caduto, o Pietrapana,
Non avria pur dall' orlo fatto cricchi."

The geographical position of Mount Tambernich is unknown.]

laid by the road side to mend it are of this ashen grey with efflorescences of manganese and iron in the fissures. The whole of Malebolge is made of this rock, "All wrought in stone of iron-coloured grain." *

Perhaps the iron colour may be meant to predominate in Evilpits; but the definite grey limestone colour is stated higher up, the river Styx flowing at the base of "malignant *grey* cliffs" † (the word malignant being given to the iron-coloured Malebolge also); and the same whitish grey idea is given again definitely in describing the robe of the purgatorial or penance angel, which is "of the colour of ashes or earth dug dry."[1] Ashes necessarily mean *wood*-ashes in an Italian mind, so that we get the tone very pale; and there can be no doubt whatever about the hue meant, because it is constantly seen on the sunny sides of the Italian hills, produced by the scorching of the ground, a dusty and lifeless whitish grey, utterly painful and oppressive; and I have no doubt that this colour, assumed eminently also by limestone crags in the sun, is the quality which Homer means to express by a term he applies often to bare rocks, and which is usually translated "craggy," or "rocky."[2] Now Homer is indeed quite capable of talking of "rocky rocks," just as he talks sometimes of "wet water"; but I think he means more by this word: it sounds as if it were derived from another, meaning "meal," or "flour," and I have little doubt it means "mealy white" the Greek limestones being for the most part brighter in effect than the Apennine ones.

§ 8. And the fact is, that the great and pre-eminent fault of southern, as compared with northern scenery, is this rock-whiteness, which gives to distant mountain ranges, lighted by the sun, sometimes a faint and monotonous glow,

* (Cayley.) "Tutto di pietra, e di color ferrigno."—*Inf.* xviii. 2.

† "Maligne piagge grige."—*Inf.* vii. 108.

[1] [*Purgatorio*, ix. 115.]

[2] [παιπαλόεις—*Iliad*, xiii. 17, etc. The derivation suggested by Ruskin is from παιπάλη (meal).]

hardly detaching itself from the whiter parts of the sky, and sometimes a speckled confusion of white light with blue shadow, breaking up the whole mass of the hills, and making them look near and small; the whiteness being still distinct at the distance of twenty or twenty-five miles. The inferiority and meagreness of such effects of hill, compared with the massive purple and blue of our own heaps of crags and morass, or the solemn grass-greens and pine-purples of the Alps, have always struck me most painfully; and they have rendered it impossible for any poet or painter studying in the south, to enter with joy into hill scenery. Imagine the difference to Walter Scott, if instead of the single lovely colour which, named by itself alone, was enough to describe his hills,—

> "Their southern rapine to renew,
> Far in the distant Cheviots' *blue*," [1]—

a dusty whiteness had been the image which first associated itself with a hill range, and he had been obliged, instead of "blue" Cheviots, to say "barley-meal-coloured" Cheviots.

§ 9. But although this would cause a somewhat painful shock even to a modern mind, it would be as nothing when compared with the pain occasioned by absence of colour to a mediæval one. We have been trained, by our ingenious principles of Renaissance architecture, to think that meal-colour and ash-colour are the properest colours of all; and that the most aristocratic harmonies are to be deduced out of grey mortar and creamy stucco. Any of our modern classical architects would delightedly "face" a heathery hill with Roman cement; and any Italian sacristan would, but for the cost of it, at once whitewash the Cheviots. But the mediævals had not arrived at these abstract principles of taste. They liked fresco better than whitewash; and, on the whole, thought that Nature was in the right in painting her flowers yellow, pink, and blue;—not grey. Accordingly,

[1] [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto iii.]

this absence of colour from rocks, as compared with meadows and trees, was in their eyes an unredeemable defect; nor did it matter to them whether its place was supplied by the grey neutral tint, or the iron-coloured stain; for both colours, grey and brown, were, to them, hues of distress, despair, and mortification, hence adopted always for the dresses of monks; only the word "brown" bore, in their colour vocabulary, a still gloomier sense than with us. I was for some time embarrassed by Dante's use of it with respect to dark skies and water.[1] Thus, in describing a simple twilight—not a Hades twilight, but an ordinarily fair evening—(*Inf.* ii. 1) he says, the "brown" air took the animals of earth away from their fatigues;—the waves under Charon's boat are "brown" (*Inf.* iii. 118); and Lethe, which is perfectly clear and yet dark, as with oblivion, is "bruna-bruna," "brown *exceeding* brown."[2] Now, clearly in all these cases, no *warmth* is meant to be mingled in the colour. Dante had never seen one of our bog-streams, with its porter-coloured foam; and there can be no doubt that, in calling Lethe brown, he means it was dark slate grey, inclining to black; as, for instance, our clear Cumberland lakes, which, looked straight down upon where they are deep, seem to be lakes of ink. I am sure this is the colour he means; because no clear stream or lake on the Continent ever looks brown, but blue or green; and Dante, by merely taking away the pleasant colour, would get at once to this idea of grave clear grey. So, when he was talking of twilight, his eye for colour was far too good to let him call it *brown*, in our sense. Twilight is not brown, but purple, golden, or dark grey; and this last was what Dante meant. Farther, I find that this negation of colour is always the means by which Dante subdues his tones. Thus the fatal inscription on the Hades gate is written in "obscure colour,"[3] and the air which torments the

[1] [On the subject of the use of "bruno" in Italian in the general sense of "dark," see *The Poems of Milton*, with notes by Thomas Keightly, 1859, vol. i. p. 65, and a letter in W. M. Rossetti's *Rossetti Papers*, 1903, pp. 79–80.]

[2] [*Purgatorio*, xxviii. 31.]

[3] [*Inferno*, iii. 10.]

passionate spirits is "aer nero," *black* air (*Inf.* v. 51), called presently afterwards (line 86) malignant air, just as the grey cliffs are called malignant cliffs.

§ 10. I was not, therefore, at a loss to find out what Dante meant by the word; but I was at a loss to account for his not, as it seemed, acknowledging the existence of the colour of *brown* at all; for if he called dark neutral tint "brown," it remained a question what term he would use for things of the colour of burnt umber. But one day, just when I was puzzling myself about this, I happened to be sitting by one of our best living modern colourists, watching him at his work, when he said, suddenly, and by mere accident, after we had been talking of other things, "Do you know I have found that there is no *brown* in Nature? What we call brown is always a variety either of orange or purple. It never can be represented by umber, unless altered by contrast."

§ 11. It is curious how far the significance of this remark extends, how exquisitely it illustrates and confirms the mediæval sense of hue;—how far, on the other hand, it cuts into the heart of the old umber idolatries of Sir George Beaumont and his colleagues, the "where do you put your *brown* tree"[1] system; the code of Cremona-violin-coloured foregrounds, of brown varnish and asphaltum; and all the old night-owl science, which, like Young's pencil of sorrow,

> "In melancholy dipped, *embrowns* the whole."[2]

Nay, I do Young an injustice by associating his words with the asphalt schools; for his eye for colour was true, and like Dante's; and I doubt not that he means dark grey, as Byron purple-grey in that night piece of the Siege of Corinth, beginning

> "'Tis midnight; on the mountains *brown*
> The cold, round moon looks deeply down;"

[1] [See Vol. III. p. 45 *n.*]
[2] [*Night Thoughts*, v. 74.]

and, by the way, Byron's best piece of evening colour farthe certifies the hues of Dante's twilight,—it

> "Dies like the dolphin, . . . as it gasps away;
> The last still loveliest; till—'tis gone—and all is *grey*." [1]

§ 12. Let not, however, the reader confuse the use o brown, as an expression of a natural tint, with its use as means of *getting other tints*. Brown is often an admirabl ground, just because it is the only tint which is *not* t be in the finished picture, and because it is the best basi of many silver greys and purples utterly opposite to it i their nature. But there is infinite difference between layin a brown ground as a representation of shadow,—and as base for light: and also an infinite difference between usin brown shadows, associated with coloured lights—always th characteristic of false schools of colour,—and using brow as a warm neutral tint for general study. I shall have t pursue this subject farther hereafter, in noticing how brow is used by great colourists in their studies, not as colou but as the pleasantest negation of colour, possessing mor transparency than black, and having more pleasant and sun like warmth. Hence Turner, in his early studies, used blu for distant neutral tint, and brown for foreground neutra tint; while, as he advanced in colour science, he gradually in troduced, in the place of brown, strange purples, altogethe peculiar to himself, founded, apparently, on Indian red an vermilion, and passing into various tones of russet an orange.* But, in the meantime, we must go back to Dant and his mountains.

§ 13. We find, then, that his general type of rock colou was meant, whether pale or dark, to be a colourless grey— the most melancholy hue which he supposed to exist i

* It is in these subtle purples that even the more elaborate passages o the earlier drawings are worked; as, for instance, the Highland streams spoken of in "Pre-Raphaelitism." [2] Also, Turner could, by opposition, ge what colour he liked out of a brown. I have seen cases in which he ha made it stand for the purest *rose* light.

[1] [*Childe Harold*, iv. 29.]
[2] [See Vol. XII. p. 368.]

Nature (hence the synonym for it, subsisting even till late times, in mediæval appellatives of dress, "*sad*-coloured")—with some rusty stain from iron; or perhaps the "color ferrigno"[1] of the Inferno does not involve even so much of orange, but ought to be translated "iron grey."

This being his idea of the colour of rocks, we have next to observe his conception of their substance. And I believe it will be found that the character on which he fixes first in them is *frangibility*—breakableness to bits, as opposed to wood, which can be sawn or rent, but not shattered with a hammer, and to metal, which is tough and malleable.

Thus, at the top of the abyss of the seventh circle, appointed for the "violent," or souls who had done evil by force, we are told, first, that the edge of it was composed of "great broken stones in a circle";[2] then, that the place was "Alpine"; and, becoming hereupon attentive, in order to hear what an Alpine place is like, we find that it was 'like the place beyond Trent, where the rock, either by earthquake, or failure of support, has broken down to the plain, so that it gives any one at the top some means of getting down to the bottom."[3] This is not a very elevated or enthusiastic description of an Alpine scene; and it is far from mended by the following verses, in which we are told that Dante "began to go down by this great *unloading* of stones," and that they moved often under his feet by reason of the new weight. The fact is that Dante, by many expressions throughout the poem, shows himself to have been a notably bad climber,[4] and being fond of sitting in the sun, looking at his fair Baptistery, or walking in a dignified manner on flat pavement in a long robe, it puts him seriously out of his way when he has to take to his hands and knees, or look to his feet; so that the first strong

[1] [*Inferno*, xviii. 2.]
[2] [*Ibid.*, xi. 2.]
[3] [*Ibid.*, xii. 4 *seq.*; and below, see *ibid.*, xii. 28, 29. Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xviii. § 25, where the former passage is cited in the Italian and in Cayley's translation.]
[4] [This has been doubted by some students of Dante: see *Inferno*, xxiii. 43–45, xiv. 64, xxxiv. 86.]

impression made upon him by any Alpine scene whatever is, clearly, that it is bad walking. When he is in a fright and hurry, and has a very steep place to go down, Virgil has to carry him altogether, and is obliged to encourage him, again and again, when they have a steep slope to go up, — the first ascent of the purgatorial mountain.[1] The similes by which he illustrates the steepness of that ascent are all taken from the Riviera of Genoa, now traversed by a good carriage road under the name of the Cornice; but as this road did not exist in Dante's time, and the steep precipices and promontories were then probably traversed by footpaths which, as they necessarily passed in many places over crumbling and slippery limestone, were doubtless not a little dangerous, and as in the manner they commanded the bays of sea below, and lay exposed to the full blaze of the south-eastern sun, they corresponded precisely to the situation of the path by which he ascends above the purgatorial sea, the image could not possibly have been taken from a better source for the fully conveying his idea to the reader: nor, by the way, is there reason to discredit, in *this* place, his powers of climbing; for, with his usual accuracy, he has taken the angle of the path for us, saying it was considerably more than forty-five.[2] Now a continuous mountain-slope of forty-five degrees is already quite unsafe either for ascent or descent, except by zigzag paths; and a greater slope than this could not be climbed, straightforward, but by help of crevices or jags in the rock, and great physical exertion besides.

§ 14. Throughout these passages, however, Dante's thoughts are clearly fixed altogether on the question of mere accessibility or inaccessibility. He does not show the smallest interest in the rocks, except as things to be conquered: and his description of their appearance is utterly meagre, involving no other epithets than "erto" (steep or

[1] [*Purgatorio*, iv. 36 *seq.*; and for Virgil carrying Dante, see *Inferno*, xxiii. 37 *seq.*]

[2] ["E la costa superba più assai,
Che da mezzo quadrante al centro lista."
—*Purg.* iv. 41, 42.]

upright), *Inf.* xix. 131, *Purg.* iii. 47, etc.; "sconcio" (monstrous), *Inf.* xix. 131; "stagliata" (cut), *Inf.* xvii. 134; "maligno" (malignant), *Inf.* vii. 108; "duro" (hard), xx. 26; with "large" and "broken" (rotto) in various places.[1] No idea of roundness, massiveness, or pleasant form of any kind appears for a moment to enter his mind; and the different names which are given to the rocks in various places seem merely to refer to variations in size: thus a "rocco" is part of a "scoglio," *Inf.* xx. 25 and xxvi. 17; a "scheggio" (xxi. 60 and xxvi. 17) is a less fragment yet; a "petrone," or "sasso," is a large stone or boulder (*Purg.* iv. 101, 104), and "pietra," a less stone,—both of these last terms, especially "sasso," being used for any large mountainous mass, as in *Par.* xxi. 106; and the vagueness of the word "monte" itself, like that of the French "montagne," applicable either to a hill on a post-road requiring the drag to be put on,—or to the Mont Blanc, marks a peculiar carelessness in both nations, at the time of the formation of their languages, as to the sublimity of the higher hills; so that the effect produced on an English ear by the word "mountain," signifying always a mass of a certain large size, cannot be conveyed either in French or Italian.

§ 15. In all these modes of regarding rocks we find (rocks being in themselves, as we shall see presently,[2] by no means monstrous or frightful things) exactly that inaccuracy in the mediæval mind which we had been led to expect, in its bearings on things contrary to the spirit of that symmetrical and perfect humanity which had formed its ideal; and it is very curious to observe how closely in the terms he uses, and the feelings they indicate, Dante here agrees with Homer. For the word stagliata (cut) corresponds very nearly to a favourite term of Homer's respecting rocks "sculptured," used by him also of ships'

[1] [For instance, *Inferno*, xi. 2, xxiii. 136; *Purgatorio*, iv. 31.]
[2] [See in the next volume, ch. xvi. ("Precipices"), ch. xviii. ("Stones"), etc.]

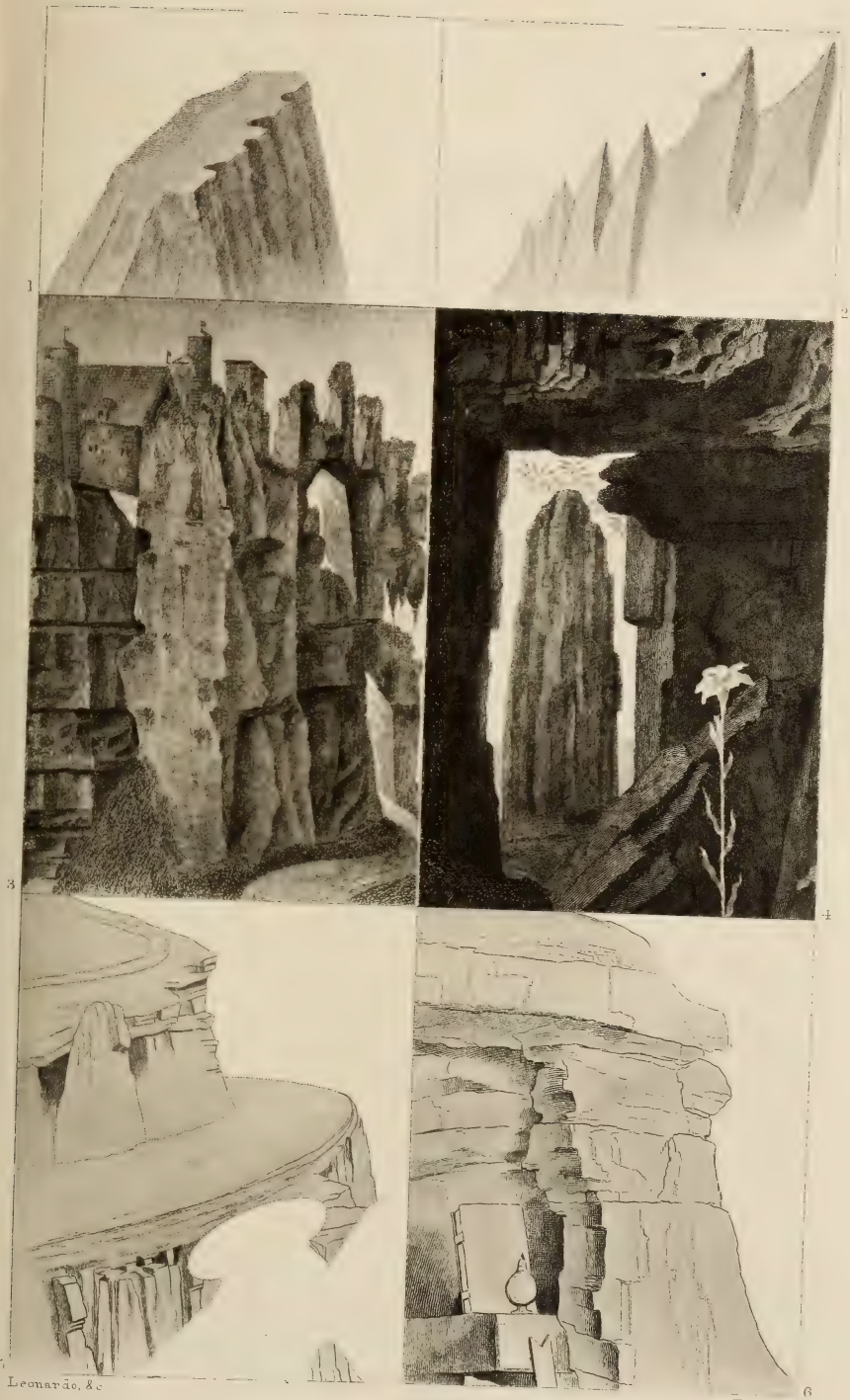
sides;[1] and the frescoes and illuminations of the Middle Ages enable us to ascertain exactly what this idea of "cut" rock was.

§ 16. In Plate 10 I have assembled some examples, which will give the reader a sufficient knowledge of mediæval rock-drawing, by men whose names are known. They are chiefly taken from engravings, with which the reader has it in his power to compare them,* and if, therefore, any injustice is done to the original paintings the fault is not mine; but the general impression conveyed is quite accurate, and it would not have been worth while, where work is so deficient in first conception, to lose time in insuring accuracy of facsimile. Some of the crags may be taller here, or broader there, than in the original paintings; but the character of the work is perfectly preserved, and that is all with which we are at present concerned.

Figs. 1 and 5 are by Ghirlandajo; 2 by Filippo Peselino; 4 by Leonardo da Vinci; and 6 by Andrea del Castagno. All these are indeed workmen of a much later period than Dante, but the system of rock-drawing remains entirely unchanged from Giotto's time to Ghirlandajo's;—is then altered only by an introduction of stratification indicative of a little closer observance of nature, and so remains until Titian's time. Fig. 1 is exactly representative of one of Giotto's rocks, though actually by Ghirlandajo; and Fig. 2 is rather less skilful than Giotto's ordinary work. Both these figures indicate precisely what Homer and Dante meant by "cut" rocks. They had observed the concave smoothness of certain rock fractures as eminently distinctive of rock from earth, and use the term "cut" or "sculptured" to distinguish the smooth surface from the knotty or sandy one, having observed nothing more respecting its real contours than is represented in Figs. 1 and 2, which

* See Appendix I. [p. 422.]

[1] [γλαφυρός: see above, p. 242; and for the application of the word to ships, see *Odyssey*, iii. 287, iv. 356. Compare also, in the next volume, ch. xvi. § 19.]



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10 . Geology of the Middle Ages .

look as if they had been hewn out with an adze. Lorenzo Ghiberti preserves the same type, even in his finest work.

Fig. 3, from an interesting sixteenth century MS. in the British Museum (Cotton, Augustus, A. 5), is characteristic of the best later illuminators' work;[1] and Fig. 5, from Ghirlandajo, is pretty illustrative of Dante's idea of terraces on the purgatorial mountain.[2] It is the road by which the Magi descend in his picture of their Adoration, in the Academy of Florence. Of the other examples I shall have more to say in the chapter on Precipices;[3] meanwhile we have to return to the landscape of the poem.

§ 17. Inaccurate as this conception of rock was, it seems to have been the only one which, in mediæval art, had place as representative of mountain scenery. To Dante, mountains are inconceivable except as great broken stones or crags; all their broad contours and undulations seem to have escaped his eye. It is, indeed, with his usual undertone of symbolic meaning that he describes the great broken stones, and the fall of the shattered mountain, as the entrance to the circle appointed for the punishment of the violent;[4] meaning that the violent and cruel, notwithstanding all their iron hardness of heart, have no true strength, but, either by earthquake, or want of support, fall at last into desolate ruin, naked, loose, and shaking under the tread. But in no part of the poem do we find allusion to mountains in any other than a stern light; nor the slightest evidence that Dante cared to look at them. From that hill of San Miniato, whose steps he knew so well, the eye commands, at the farther extremity of the Val d'Arno, the whole purple range of the mountains of Carrara, peaked and mighty, seen always against the sunset light in silent outline, the chief forms that rule

[1] [For further references to this MS., which, however, is of the fifteenth century, see Vol. VI. pp. 99, 309.]
[2] [*Purgatorio*, xvii. 137; xxii. 92, etc., etc.]
[3] [See ch. xvi. §§ 35, 36, in the next volume.]
[4] [As above (p. 303), the opening lines of *Inferno*, xi.]

the scene as twilight fades away. By this vision Dante seems to have been wholly unmoved, and, but for Lucan's mention of Aruns at Luna would seemingly not have spoken of the Carrara hills in the whole course of his poem:[1] when he does allude to them, he speaks of their white marble, and their command of stars and sea, but has evidently no regard for the hills themselves. There is not a single phrase or syllable throughout the poem which indicates such a regard. Ugolino, in his dream, seemed to himself to be in the mountains, "by cause of which the Pisan cannot see Lucca;"[2] and it is impossible to look up from Pisa to that hoary slope without remembering the awe that there is in the passage; nevertheless, it was as a hunting-ground only that he remembered those hills. Adam of Brescia, tormented with eternal thirst, remembers the hills of Romena, but only for the sake of their sweet waters:

> "The rills that glitter down the grassy slopes
> Of Casentino, making fresh and soft
> The banks whereby they glide to Arno's stream,
> Stand ever in my view."[3]

And, whenever hills are spoken of as having any influence on character, the repugnance to them is still manifest; they are always causes of rudeness or cruelty:

> "But that ungrateful and malignant race,
> Who in old times came down from Fesole,
> *Ay, and still smack of their rough mountain flint,*
> Will, for thy good deeds, show thee enmity.
> Take heed thou cleanse thee of their ways."

So again—

> "As one *mountain-bred,*
> Rugged, and clownish, if some city's walls
> He chance to enter, round him stares agape."

[1] [See *Inferno*, xx. 46. The reference in Lucan is *Pharsalia*, i. 575.]
[2] [*Inferno*, xxxiii. 30.]
[3] [*Inferno*, xxx. 66; the translation here and in the following passages is Cary's. The other references in § 17 are *Inferno*, xv. 64 *seq.*, xv. 62 *seq.*; *Purgatorio*, xxvi. 67–69.]

§ 18. Finally, although the Carrara mountains are named as having command of the stars and sea, the *Alps* are never specially mentioned but in bad weather, or snow. On the sand of the circle of the blasphemers—

> "Fell slowly wafting down
> Dilated flakes of fire, as flakes of snow
> On Alpine summit, when the wind is hushed."[1]

So the Paduans have to defend their town and castles against inundation,

> "Ere the genial warmth be felt,
> On Chiarentana's top."

The clouds of anger, in Purgatory, can only be figured to the reader who has

> "On an Alpine height been ta'en by cloud,
> Through which thou sawest no better than the mole
> Doth through opacous membrane."

And in approaching the second branch of Lethe, the seven ladies pause,—

> "Arriving at the verge
> Of a dim umbrage hoar, such as is seen
> Beneath green leaves and gloomy branches oft
> To overbrow a bleak and Alpine cliff."

§ 19. Truly, it is unfair of Dante, that when he is going to use snow for a lovely image, and speak of it as melting away under heavenly sunshine, he must needs put it on the Apennines, not on the Alps:

> "As snow that lies
> Amidst the living rafters, on the back
> Of Italy, congealed, when drifted high
> And closely piled by rough Sclavonian blasts,
> Breathe but the land whereon no shadow falls.
> And straightway, melting, it distils away,
> Like a fire-wasted taper; thus was I,
> Without a sigh, or tear, consumed in heart."[2]

[1] [*Inferno*, xiv. 30 (Cary's translation). The other references in § 18 are *Inferno*, xv. 9; *Purgatorio*, xvii. 1–3, xxxiii. 109 *seq.*]

[2] [*Purgatorio*, xxx. 88.]

The reader will thank me for reminding him, though out of its proper order, of the exquisite passage of Scott which we have to compare with this:

> "As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
> Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
> Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
> And at the monarch's feet she lay."[1]

Examine the context of this last passage, and its beauty is quite beyond praise; but note the northern love of rocks in the very first words I have to quote from Scott, "The rock that gave it rest." Dante could not have thought of his "cut rocks" as giving rest even to snow. He must put it on the pine branches, if it is to be at peace.

§ 20. There is only one more point to be noticed in the Dantesque landscape; namely, the feeling entertained by the poet towards the sky. And the love of mountains is so closely connected with the love of clouds, the sublimity of both depending much on their association, that, having found Dante regardless of the Carrara mountains as seen from San Miniato, we may well expect to find him equally regardless of the clouds in which the sun sank behind them. Accordingly, we find that his only pleasure in the sky depends on its "white clearness,"—that turning into "bianco aspetto di cilestro" which is so peculiarly characteristic of fine days in Italy.[2] His pieces of pure pale light are always exquisite. In the dawn on the purgatorial mountain, first, in its pale white, he sees the "tremolar della marina"[3]—trembling of the sea; then it becomes vermilion; and at last, near sunrise, orange.[4] These are precisely the changes of a calm and perfect dawn. The scenery of Paradise begins with "Day added to day," the light of the sun so flooding the heavens, that "never rain nor river made lake so

[1] [*Lady of the Lake*, vi. 27.]
[2] [*Purgatorio*, xxvi. 6; on the white Italian skies compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 144 and *n.*).]
[3] [*Purgatorio*, i. 117.]
[4] [*Purgatorio*, ii. 7–9.]

wide;"[1] and throughout the Paradise all the beauty depends on spheres of light, or stars, never on clouds. But the pit of the Inferno is at first sight obscure, deep, and so *cloudy* that at its bottom nothing could be seen.[2] When Dante and Virgil reach the marsh in which the souls of those who have been angry and sad in their lives are for ever plunged, they find it covered with thick fog; and the condemned souls say to them,—

> "We once were sad,
> In the *sweet air made gladsome by the sun.*
> Now in these murky settlings are we sad."

Even the angel crossing the marsh to help them is annoyed by this bitter marsh smoke "fummo acerbo," and continually sweeps it with his hand from before his face.[3]

Anger, on the purgatorial mountain, is in like manner imaged, because of its blindness and wildness, by the Alpine clouds. As they emerge from its mist they see the white light radiated through the fading folds of it; and, except this appointed cloud, no other can touch the mountain of purification.

> "Tempest none, shower, hail, or snow,
> Hoar-frost, or dewy moistness, higher falls,
> Than that brief scale of threefold steps. Thick clouds,
> Nor scudding rack, are ever seen, swift glance
> Ne'er lightens, nor Thaumantian iris gleams."[4]

Dwell for a little while on this intense love of Dante for light,—taught, as he is at last by Beatrice, to gaze on the sun itself like an eagle,[5]—and endeavour to enter into his equally intense detestation of all mist, rack of cloud, or dimness of rain; and then consider with what kind of temper he would have regarded a landscape of Copley

[1] [*Paradiso*, i. 61, 62, 80, 81.]
[2] [*Inferno*, iv. 10–12; for the next quotation (*ibid.*, vii. 121 *seq.*) see also *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 381).]
[3] [*Inferno*, ix. 82, 83.]
[4] [*Purgatorio*, xxi. 46 *seq.*]
[5] [*Paradiso*, i. 47, 48. Dante, however, does not say that he himself could gaze upon the sun, but only that Beatrice so gazed.]

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Fielding's, or passed a day in the Highlands. He has, in fact, assigned to the souls of the gluttonous no other punishment in the Inferno than perpetuity of Highland weather:

> "Showers
> Ceaseless, accursed, heavy and cold, unchanged
> For ever, both in kind and in degree,—
> Large hail, discoloured water, sleety flaw,
> Through the dim midnight air streamed down amain." [1]

§ 21. However, in this immitigable dislike of clouds, Dante goes somewhat beyond the general temper of his age. For although the calm sky was alone loved, and storm and rain were dreaded by all men, yet the white horizontal clouds of serene summer were regarded with great affection by all early painters, and considered as one of the accompaniments of the manifestation of spiritual power; sometimes, for theological reasons which we shall soon have to examine, being received, even without any other sign, as the types of blessing or Divine acceptance; and in almost every representation of the heavenly paradise, these level clouds are set by the early painters for its floor, or for thrones of its angels; whereas Dante retains steadily, through circle after circle, his cloudless thought, and concludes his painting of heaven, as he began it, upon the purgatorial mountain, with the image of shadowless morning:

> "I raised my eyes, and as at morn is seen
> The horizon's eastern quarter to excel,
> So likewise, that pacific Oriflamb
> Glowed in the midmost, and toward every part,
> With like gradation paled away its flame." [2]

But the best way of regarding this feeling of Dante's is as the ultimate and most intense expression of the love of light, colour, and clearness, which, as we saw above, distinguish the mediæval from the Greek on one side, and, as

[1] [*Inferno*, vi. 7 *seq.* (Cary).]

[2] [*Paradiso*, xxxi. 118, 119, 127–129 (seven lines being omitted in Ruskin's quotation after the first two). He here uses Cayley's translation, in which, however, "Auriflame" is read for "Oriflamb"—*i.e.* the Aurea flamma, a standard originally belonging to the monks of St. Denis, and assumed by the French kings in the field during the twelfth and following centuries.]

we shall presently see, distinguished him from the modern on the other. For it is evident that precisely in the degree in which the Greek was agriculturally inclined, in that degree the sight of clouds would become to him more acceptable than to the mediæval knight, who only looked for the fine afternoons in which he might gather the flowers in his garden, and in nowise shared or imagined the previous anxieties of his gardener. Thus, when we find Ulysses comforted about Ithaca, by being told it had "plenty of rain," and the maids of Colonos boasting of their country for the same reason,[1] we may be sure that they had some regard for clouds; and accordingly, except Aristophanes, of whom more presently,[2] all the Greek poets speak fondly of the clouds, and consider them the fitting resting-places of the gods; including in their idea of clouds not merely the thin clear cirrus, but the rolling and changing volume of the thunder-cloud; nor even these only, but also the dusty whirlwind cloud of the earth, as in that noble chapter of Herodotus which tells us of the cloud, full of mystic voices, that rose out of the dust of Eleusis, and went down to Salamis.[3] Clouds and rain were of course regarded with a like gratitude by the eastern and southern nations—Jews and Egyptians; and it is only among the northern mediævals, with whom fine weather was rarely so prolonged as to occasion painful drought, or dangerous famine, and over whom the clouds broke coldly and fiercely when they came, that the love of serene light assumes its intense character, and the fear of tempest its gloomiest; so that the powers of the clouds which to the Greek foretold his conquest at Salamis, and with whom he fought in alliance, side by side with their lightnings, under the crest of Parnassus,[4] seemed, in the heart of the Middle Ages, to be

[1] [For Ithaca, see above, p. 243; and for the reference to the Chorus in the *Œdipus Coloneus*, p. 273.]

[2] [See below, p. 318.]

[3] [Herodotus, viii. 65. Compare Vol. IV. p. 330, where the passage is also referred to.]

[4] [See again Vol. IV. p. 330 *n.*]

only under the dominion of the spirit of evil. I have reserved, for our last example of the landscape of Dante, the passage in which this conviction is expressed; a passage not less notable for its close description of what the writer feared and disliked, than for the ineffable tenderness, in which Dante is always raised as much above all other poets, as in softness the rose above all other flowers. It is the spirit of Buonconte da Montefeltro who speaks:

"Then said another: 'Ah, so may thy wish,
That takes thee o'er the mountain, be fulfilled,
As thou shalt graciously give aid to mine!
Of Montefeltro I; Buonconte I:
Giovanna, nor none else, have care for me;
Sorrowing with these I therefore go.' I thus:
'From Campaldino's field what force or chance
Drew thee, that ne'er thy sepulture was known?'
'Oh!' answered he, 'at Casentino's foot
A stream there courseth, named Archiano, sprung
In Apennine, above the hermit's seat.
E'en where its name is cancelled, there came I,
Pierced in the throat, fleeing away on foot,
And bloodying the plain. Here sight and speech
Failed me; and finishing with Mary's name,
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remained.

. . . . . .

That evil will, which in his intellect
Still follows evil, came; . .
. . the valley, soon
As day was spent, *he covered o'er with cloud,*
From Pratomagno to the mountain range,
And stretched the sky above; so that the air,
Impregnate, changed to water. Fell the rain;
And to the fosses came all that the land
Contained not; and, as mightiest streams are wont,
To the great river, with such headlong sweep,
Rushed, that nought stayed its course. My stiffened frame,
Laid at its mouth, the fell Archiano found,
And dashed it into Arno; from my breast
Loosening the cross, that of myself I made
When overcome with pain. He hurled me on,
Along the banks and bottom of his course;
Then in his muddy spoils encircling wrapt.'" [1]

[1] [*Purgatorio*, v. 84–102, 112, 113, 115–129 (Cary's translation).]

Observe, Buonconte, as he dies, crosses his arms over his breast, pressing them together, partly in his pain, partly in prayer. His body thus lies by the river shore, as on a sepulchral monument, the arms folded into a cross. The rage of the river, under the influence of the evil demon, *unlooses this cross*, dashing the body supinely away, and rolling it over and over by bank and bottom. Nothing can be truer to the action of a stream in fury than these lines. And how desolate is it all! The lonely flight,—the grisly wound, "pierced in the throat,"—the death, without help or pity,—only the name of Mary on the lips,—and the cross folded over the heart. Then the rage of the demon and the river,—the noteless grave,—and, at last, even she who had been most trusted forgetting him,—

"Giovanna, nor none else, have care for me."

There is, I feel assured, nothing else like it in all the range of poetry; a faint and harsh echo of it, only, exists in one Scottish ballad, "The Twa Corbies."[1]

Here, then, I think, we may close our inquiry into the nature of the mediæval landscape; not but that many details yet require to be worked out; but these will be best observed by recurrence to them, for comparison with similar details in modern landscape,—our principal purpose, the getting at the governing tones and temper of conception, being, I believe, now sufficiently accomplished. And I think that our subject may be best pursued by immediately turning from the mediæval to the perfectly modern landscape; for although I have much to say respecting the transitional state of mind exhibited in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I believe the transitions may be more easily explained after we have got clear sight of the extremes; and that by getting perfect and separate hold of the three great phases of art,—Greek, mediæval, and

[1] [For another reference to the ballad, see *Præterita*, i. ch. iii. § 68.]

modern,—we shall be enabled to trace, with least chance of error, those curious vacillations which brought us to the modern temper while vainly endeavouring to resuscitate the Greek. I propose, therefore, in the next chapter to examine the spirit of modern landscape, as seen generally in modern painting, and especially in the poetry of Scott.

CHAPTER XVI

OF MODERN LANDSCAPE

§ 1. We turn our eyes, therefore, as boldly and as quickly as may be, from these serene fields and skies of mediæval art, to the most characteristic examples of modern landscape. And, I believe, the first thing that will strike us, or that ought to strike us, is their *cloudiness*.

Out of perfect light and motionless air, we find ourselves on a sudden brought under sombre skies, and into drifting wind; and, with fickle sunbeams flashing in our face, or utterly drenched with sweep of rain, we are reduced to track the changes of the shadows on the grass, or watch the rents of twilight through angry cloud. And we find that whereas all the pleasure of the mediæval was in *stability*, *definiteness*, and *luminousness*, we are expected to rejoice in darkness, and triumph in mutability; to lay the foundation of happiness in things which momentarily change or fade; and to expect the utmost satisfaction and instruction from what it is impossible to arrest, and difficult to comprehend.

§ 2. We find, however, together with this general delight in breeze and darkness, much attention to the real form of clouds, and careful drawing of effects of mist; so that the appearance of objects, as seen through it, becomes a subject of science with us; and the faithful representation of that appearance is made of primal importance, under the name of aerial perspective. The aspects of sunset and sunrise, with all their attendant phenomena of cloud and mist, are watchfully delineated; and in ordinary daylight landscape, the sky is considered of so much importance, that a principal mass of foliage, or a whole foreground, is unhesitatingly thrown into shade merely to bring out the form of a white

cloud. So that, if a general and characteristic name were needed for modern landscape art, none better could be invented than "the service of clouds."

§ 3. And this name would, unfortunately, be characteristic of our art in more ways than one. In the last chapter, I said that all the Greeks spoke kindly about the clouds, except Aristophanes; and he, I am sorry to say (since his report is so unfavourable), is the only Greek who had studied them attentively. He tells us, first, that they are "great goddesses to idle men"; then, that they are "mistresses of disputings, and logic, and monstrosities, and noisy chattering"; declares that whoso believes in their divinity must first disbelieve in Jupiter, and place supreme power in the hands of an unknown god "Whirlwind"; and, finally, he displays their influence over the mind of one of their disciples, in his sudden desire "to speak ingeniously concerning smoke."[1]

There is, I fear, an infinite truth in this Aristophanic judgment applied to our modern cloud-worship. Assuredly, much of the love of mystery in our romances, our poetry, our art, and, above all, in our metaphysics, must come under that definition so long ago given by the great Greek, "speaking ingeniously concerning smoke." And much of the instinct, which, partially developed in painting, may be now seen throughout every mode of exertion of mind,—the easily encouraged doubt, easily excited curiosity, habitual agitation, and delight in the changing and the marvellous, as opposed to the old quiet serenity of social custom and religious faith,—is again deeply defined in those few words, the "dethroning of Jupiter," the "coronation of the whirlwind."

§ 4. Nor of whirlwind merely, but also of darkness or ignorance respecting all stable facts. That darkening of the foreground to bring out the white cloud, is, in one aspect of it, a type of the subjection of all plain and positive fact,

[1] [*Clouds*, 316-318; 380; 320.]

to what is uncertain and unintelligible. And, as we examine farther into the matter, we shall be struck by another great difference between the old and modern landscape, namely, that in the old no one ever thought of drawing anything but as well *as he could*. That might not be *well*, as we have seen in the case of rocks; but it was as well as he *could*, and always distinctly. Leaf, or stone, or animal, or man, it was equally drawn with care and clearness, and its essential characters shown. If it was an oak tree, the acorns were drawn; if a flint pebble, its veins were drawn; if an arm of the sea, its fish were drawn; if a group of figures, their faces and dresses were drawn—to the very last subtlety of expression and end of thread that could be got into the space, far off or near. But now our ingenuity is all "concerning smoke." Nothing is truly drawn but that; all else is vague, slight, imperfect; got with as little pains as possible. You examine your closest foreground, and find no leaves; your largest oak, and find no acorns; your human figure, and find a spot of red paint instead of a face; and in all this, again and again, the Aristophanic words come true, and the clouds seem to be "great goddesses to idle men."

§ 5. The next thing that will strike us, after this love of clouds, is the love of liberty. Whereas the mediæval was always shutting himself into castles, and behind fosses, and drawing brickwork neatly, and beds of flowers primly, our painters delight in getting to the open fields and moors, abhor all hedges and moats; never paint anything but free-growing trees, and rivers gliding "at their own sweet will";[1] eschew formality down to the smallest detail; break and displace the brickwork which the mediæval would have carefully cemented; leave unpruned the thickets he would have delicately trimmed; and, carrying the love of liberty even to license, and the love of wildness even to ruin, take pleasure at last in every aspect of age and desolation which

[1] [Wordsworth, *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, part ii. No. 36.]

emancipates the objects of nature from the government of men;—on the castle wall displacing its tapestry with ivy, and spreading, through the garden, the bramble for the rose.

§ 6. Connected with this love of liberty we find a singular manifestation of love of mountains, and see our painters traversing the wildest places of the globe in order to obtain subjects with craggy foregrounds and purple distances. Some few of them remain content with pollards and flat land; but these are always men of third-rate order and the leading masters, while they do not reject the beauty of the low grounds, reserve their highest powers to paint Alpine peaks or Italian promontories. And it is eminently noticeable, also, that this pleasure in the mountains is never mingled with fear, or tempered by a spirit of meditation, as with the mediæval; but is always free and fearless, brightly exhilarating, and wholly unreflective; so that the painter feels that his mountain foreground may be more consistently animated by a sportsman than a hermit; and our modern society in general goes to the mountains, not to fast, but to feast, and leaves their glaciers covered with chicken-bones and egg-shells.

§ 7. Connected with this want of any sense of solemnity in mountain scenery, is a general profanity of temper in regarding all the rest of nature; that is to say, a total absence of faith in the presence of any deity therein. Whereas the mediæval never painted a cloud, but with the purpose of placing an angel in it; and a Greek never entered a wood without expecting to meet a god in it. *we* should think the appearance of an angel in the cloud wholly unnatural, and should be seriously surprised by meeting a god anywhere. Our chief ideas about the wood are connected with poaching. We have no belief that the clouds contain more than so many inches of rain or hail, and from our ponds and ditches expect nothing more divine than ducks and watercresses.

§ 8. Finally: connected with this profanity of temper is

a strong tendency to deny the sacred element of colour, and make our boast in blackness. For though occasionally glaring or violent, modern colour is on the whole eminently sombre, tending continually to grey or brown, and by many of our best painters consistently falsified, with a confessed pride in what they call chaste or subdued tints; so that, whereas a mediæval paints his sky bright blue and his foreground bright green, gilds the towers of his castles, and clothes his figures with purple and white, we paint our sky grey, our foreground black, and our foliage brown, and think that enough is sacrificed to the sun in admitting the dangerous brightness of a scarlet cloak or a blue jacket.

§ 9. These, I believe, are the principal points which would strike us instantly, if we were to be brought suddenly into an exhibition of modern landscapes out of a room filled with mediæval work. It is evident that there are both evil and good in this change; but how much evil, or how much good, we can only estimate by considering, as in the former divisions of our inquiry, what are the real roots of the habits of mind which have caused them.

Distinctive characters of the modern mind:

At first, it is evident that the title "Dark Ages," given to the mediæval centuries, is, respecting art, wholly inapplicable. They were, on the contrary, the bright ages; ours are the dark ones. I do not mean metaphysically, but literally. They were the ages of gold; ours are the ages of umber.

1. Despondency arising from faithlessness.

This is partly mere mistake in us; we build brown brick walls, and wear brown coats, because we have been blunderingly taught to do so, and go on doing so mechanically. There is, however, also some cause for the change in our own tempers. On the whole, these are much *sadder* ages than the early ones; not sadder in a noble and deep way, but in a dim wearied way,—the way of ennui, and jaded intellect, and uncomfortableness of soul and body.[1] The Middle Ages had their wars and agonies, but also intense delights.

[1] [Compare *Modern Painters,* vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xii. § 4.]

Their gold was dashed with blood; but ours is sprinkle with dust. Their life was inwoven with white and purple ours is one seamless stuff of brown. Not that we ar without apparent festivity, but festivity more or less force mistaken, embittered, incomplete—not of the heart. Ho wonderfully, since Shakspere's time, have we lost the powe of laughing at bad jests! The very finish of our wit beli our gaiety.

§ 10. The profoundest reason of this darkness of heart i I believe, our want of faith. There never yet was a genera tion of men (savage or civilized) who, taken as a body, s wofully fulfilled the words "having no hope, and witho God in the world,"[1] as the present civilized European rac A Red Indian or Otaheitan savage has more sense of divine existence round him, or government over him, tha the plurality of refined Londoners and Parisians: and thos among us who may in some sense be said to believe, ar divided almost without exception into two broad classe Romanist and Puritan; who, but for the interference c the unbelieving portions of society, would, either of then reduce the other sect as speedily as possible to ashes; th Romanist having always done so whenever he could, fro the beginning of their separation, and the Puritan at th time holding himself in complacent expectation of the d struction of Rome by volcanic fire. Such division as th between persons nominally of one religion, that is to sa believing in the same God, and the same Revelation, canno but become a stumbling-block of the gravest kind to a thoughtful and far-sighted men,—a stumbling-block whic they can only surmount under the most favourable circu stances of early education. Hence, nearly all our powerfu men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best c them in doubt and misery; the worst in reckless defiance the plurality, in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as the can, what practical work lies ready to their hands. Mo

[1] [Ephesians ii. 12.]

f our scientific men are in this last class: our popular uthors either set themselves definitely against all religious orm, pleading for simple truth and benevolence, (Thackeray, Dickens,) or give themselves up to bitter and fruitless statement of facts, (De Balzac,) or surface-painting, (Scott,) or areless blasphemy, sad or smiling, (Byron, Beranger). Our arnest poets and deepest thinkers are doubtful and indigant, (Tennyson, Carlyle); one or two, anchored, indeed, ut anxious or weeping, (Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning); and f these two, the first is not so sure of his anchor, but that ow and then it drags with him, even to make him cry ut,—

> "Great God, I had rather be
> A Pagan suckled in some creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn." [1]

In politics, religion is now a name; in art, a hypocrisy r affectation. Over German religious pictures the inscripon, "See how Pious I am," can be read at a glance by ny clear-sighted person. Over French and English religious pictures the inscription, "See how Impious I am," is qually legible. All sincere and modest art is, among us, rofane.*

§ 11. This faithlessness operates among us according to ur tempers, producing either sadness or levity, 2. *Levity, from the same cause.* nd being the ultimate root alike of our disconents and of our wantonnesses. It is marvellous how full f contradiction it makes us: we are first dull, and seek or wild and lonely places because we have no heart for he garden; presently we recover our spirits, and build an ssembly-room among the mountains, because we have no

* Pre-Raphaelitism, of course, excepted, which is a new phase of art, in no ise considered in this chapter. Blake was sincere, but full of wild creeds, nd somewhat diseased in brain.[2]

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[1] [*Miscellaneous Sonnets*, part i. No. 33.]
[2] [For Blake, see above, p. 138.]

reverence for the desert. I do not know if there be gan on Sinai, but I am always expecting to hear of some one shooting over it.[1]

§ 12. There is, however, another, and a more innocen root of our delight in wild scenery.

3. Reactionary love of inanimate beauty.

All the Renaissance principles of art tended, as I hav before often explained, to the setting Beaut above Truth, and seeking for it always at th expense of truth. And the proper punishmer of such pursuit—the punishment which all the laws of th universe rendered inevitable — was, that those who thu pursued beauty should wholly lose sight of beauty. All th thinkers of the age, as we saw previously, declared that did not exist. The age seconded their efforts, and banishe beauty, so far as human effort could succeed in doing s from the face of the earth, and the form of man. T powder the hair, to patch the cheek, to hoop the body to buckle the foot, were all part and parcel of the sam system which reduced streets to brick walls, and picture to brown stains. One desert of Ugliness was extende before the eyes of mankind; and their pursuit of the beau tiful, so recklessly continued, received unexpected consum mation in high-heeled shoes and periwigs—Gower Street and Gaspar Poussin.

§ 13. Reaction from this state was inevitable, if an true life was left in the races of mankind; and, accordingly though still forced, by rule and fashion, to the producin and wearing all that is ugly, men steal out, half-ashame of themselves for doing so, to the fields and mountains and, finding among these the colour, and liberty, an variety, and power, which are for ever grateful to them delight in these to an extent never before known; rejoic in all the wildest shattering of the mountain side, as a opposition to Gower Street, gaze in a rapt manner a

[1] [An expectation presently fulfilled: see Ruskin's description of a drawing b J. F. Lewis, *Academy Notes*, 1856 (*s.* Old Water-Colour Society).]

[2] [Compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 4).]

insets and sunrises, to see there the blue, and gold, and urple, which glow for them no longer on knight's armour r temple porch; and gather with care out of the fields, ito their blotted herbaria, the flowers which the five orders f architecture have banished from their doors and case-ients.[1]

§ 14. The absence of care for personal beauty, which is nother great characteristic of the age, adds to his feeling in a twofold way: first, by turning ll reverent thoughts away from human nature; and making s think of men as ridiculous or ugly creatures, getting hrough the world as well as they can, and spoiling it in oing so; not ruling it in a kingly way and crowning all s loveliness. In the Middle Ages hardly anything but ice could be caricatured, because virtue was always visibly nd personally noble: now virtue itself is apt to inhabit ich poor human bodies, that no aspect of it is invulnerable o jest; and for all fairness we have to seek to the flowers, or all sublimity, to the hills.

4. Disdain of beauty in man.

The same want of care operates, in another way, by owering the standard of health, increasing the susceptibility o nervous or sentimental impressions, and thus adding to he other powers of nature over us whatever charm may e felt in her fostering the melancholy fancies of brooding lleness.

§ 15. It is not, however, only to existing inanimate ature that our want of beauty in person and ress has driven us. The imagination of it, as was seen in our ancestors, haunts us con-nually; and while we yield to the present fashions, or ct in accordance with the dullest modern principles of conomy and utility, we look fondly back to the manners f the ages of chivalry, and delight in painting, to the ancy, the fashions we pretend to despise, and the splendours

5. Romantic imagination of the past.

[1] [Here is the point of connexion between *The Stones of Venice* and *Modern Painters* hich Ruskin notes in a letter cited in Vol. X. pp. 207–208 *n.*]

we think it wise to abandon. The furniture and personage of our romance are sought, when the writer desires to please most easily, in the centuries which we profess to have surpassed in everything; the art which takes us into the present times is considered as both daring and degraded, and while the weakest words please us, and are regarded as poetry, which recall the manners of our forefathers, or of strangers, it is only as familiar and vulgar that we accept the description of our own.

In this we are wholly different from all the races that preceded us. All other nations have regarded their ancestors with reverence as saints or heroes; but have nevertheless thought their own deeds and ways of life the fitting subjects for their arts of painting or of verse. We, on the contrary, regard our ancestors as foolish and wicked, but yet find our chief artistic pleasure in descriptions of their ways of life.

The Greeks and mediævals honoured, but did not imitate their forefathers; we imitate, but do not honour.

§ 16. With this romantic love of beauty, forced to seek in history, and in external nature, the satisfaction it cannot find in ordinary life, we mingle a more rational passion, the due and just result of newly awakened powers of attention. Whatever may first lead us to the scrutiny of natural objects, that scrutiny never fails of its reward. Unquestionably they are intended to be regarded by us with both reverence and delight; and every hour we give to them renders their beauty more apparent, and their interest more engrossing. Natural science—which can hardly be considered to have existed before modern times—rendering our knowledge fruitful in accumulation, and exquisite in accuracy, has acted for good or evil, according to the temper of the mind which received it; and though it has hardened the faithlessness of the dull and proud, has shown new grounds for reverence to hearts which were thoughtful and humble. The neglect of the art of war, while it has somewhat weakened and

6. *Interest in science.*

7. *Fear of war.*

deformed the body,* has given us leisure and opportunity for studies to which, before, time and space were equally wanting; lives which once were early wasted on the battle-field are now passed usefully in the study; nations which exhausted themselves in annual warfare now dispute with each other the discovery of new planets;[1] and the serene philosopher dissects the plants, and analyses the dust, of lands which were of old only traversed by the knight in hasty march, or by the borderer in heedless rapine.

§ 17. The elements of progress and decline being thus strangely mingled in the modern mind, we might beforehand anticipate that one of the notable characters of our art would be its inconsistency; that efforts would be made in every direction, and arrested by every conceivable cause and manner of failure; that in all we did, it would become next to impossible to distinguish accurately the grounds for praise or for regret; that all previous canons of practice and methods of thought would be gradually overthrown, and criticism continually defied by successes which no one had expected, and sentiments which no one could define.

§ 18. Accordingly, while, in our inquiries into Greek and mediæval art, I was able to describe, in general terms, what all men did or felt, I find now many characters in many men; some, it seems to me, founded on the inferior and evanescent principles of modernism, on its recklessness, impatience, or faithlessness; others founded on its science, its new affection for nature, its love of openness and liberty. And among all these characters, good or evil, I see that some, remaining to us from old or transitional periods, do not properly belong to us, and will soon fade away, and

* Of course this is meant only of the modern citizen or country gentleman, as compared with a citizen of Sparta or old Florence. I leave it to others to say whether the "neglect of the *art* of war" may or may not, in a yet more fatal sense, be predicated of the English nation. War *without* art, we seem, with God's help, able still to wage nobly.

[1] [The reference here and in the author's note above is of course to the Crimean War, to the alliance of France and England therein, and to the discoveries of various minor planets in the two countries severally during the years 1854–1856.]

others, though not yet distinctly developed, are yet properly our own, and likely to grow forward into greater strength.

For instance: our reprobation of bright colour is, I think, for the most part, mere affectation, and must soon be done away with. Vulgarity, dulness, or impiety, will indeed always express themselves through art in brown and grey, as in Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Salvator; but we are not wholly vulgar, dull, or impious; nor, as moderns, are we necessarily obliged to continue so in anywise. Our greatest men, whether sad or gay, still delight, like the great men of all ages, in brilliant hues. The colouring of Scott and Byron is full and pure; that of Keats and Tennyson rich even to excess. Our practical failures in colouring are merely the necessary consequences of our prolonged want of practice during the periods of Renaissance affectation and ignorance; and the only durable difference between old and modern colouring, is the acceptance of certain hues, by the modern, which please him by expressing that melancholy peculiar to his more reflective or sentimental character, and the greater variety of them necessary to express his greater science.

§ 19. Again: if we ever become wise enough to dress consistently and gracefully, to make health a principal object in education, and to render our streets beautiful with art, the external charm of past history will in great measure disappear. There is no essential reason, because we live after the fatal seventeenth century, that we should never again be able to confess interest in sculpture, or see brightness in embroidery; nor, because now we choose to make the night deadly with our pleasures, and the day with our labours, prolonging the dance till dawn, and the toil to twilight, that we should never again learn how rightly to employ the sacred trusts of strength, beauty, and time. Whatever external charm attaches itself to the past, would then be seen in proper subordination to the brightness of present life; and the elements of romance would exist, in the earlier ages, only in the attraction which must generally

belong to whatever is unfamiliar; in the reverence which a noble nation always pays to its ancestors; and in the enchanted light which races, like individuals, must perceive in looking back to the days of their childhood.

§ 20. Again: the peculiar levity with which natural scenery is regarded by a large number of modern minds cannot be considered as entirely characteristic of the age, inasmuch as it never can belong to its greatest intellects. Men of any high mental power must be serious, whether in ancient or modern days; a certain degree of reverence for fair scenery is found in all our great writers without exception,—even the one who has made us laugh oftenest, taking us to the valley of Chamouni, and to the sea beach, there to give peace after suffering, and change revenge into pity.* It is only the dull, the uneducated, or the worldly, whom it is painful to meet on the hill sides; and levity, as a ruling character, cannot be ascribed to the whole nation, but only to its holiday-making apprentices, and its House of Commons.

§ 21. We need not, therefore, expect to find any single poet or painter representing the entire group of powers, weaknesses, and inconsistent instincts which govern or confuse our modern life. But we may expect that in the man who seems to be given by Providence as the type of the age (as Homer and Dante were given, as the types of classical and mediæval mind), we shall find whatever is fruitful and substantial to be completely present, together with those of our weaknesses, which are indeed nationally characteristic, and compatible with general greatness of mind, just as the weak love of fences, and dislike of mountains, were found compatible with Dante's greatness in other respects.

§ 22. Farther: as the admiration of mankind is found, in our times, to have in great part passed from men to mountains, and from human emotion to natural phenomena, we may anticipate that the great strength of art will also

* See *David Copperfield*, chap. lv. and lviii.

be warped in this direction; with this notable result for us, that whereas the greatest painters or painter of classical and mediæval periods, being wholly devoted to the representation of humanity, furnished us with but little to examine in landscape, the greatest painters or painter of modern times will in all probability be devoted to landscape principally; and farther, because in representing human emotion words surpass painting, but in representing natural scenery painting surpasses words, we may anticipate also that the painter and poet (for convenience' sake I here use the words in opposition) will somewhat change their relations of rank in illustrating the mind of the age; that the painter will become of more importance, the poet of less; and that the relations between the men who are the types and first-fruits of the age in word and work,—namely, Scott and Turner,—will be, in many curious respects, different from those between Homer and Phidias, or Dante and Giotto.[1]

It is this relation which we have now to examine.

§ 23. And, first, I think it probable that many readers may be surprised at my calling Scott the great representative of the mind of the age in literature. Those who can perceive the intense penetrative depth of Wordsworth, and the exquisite finish and melodious power of Tennyson, may be offended at my placing in higher rank that poetry of careless glance, and reckless rhyme, in which Scott poured out the fancies of his youth; and those who are familiar with the subtle analysis of the French novelists, or who have in anywise submitted themselves to the influence of German philosophy, may be equally indignant at my ascribing a principality to Scott among the literary men of Europe, in an age which has produced De Balzac and Goethe.[2]

[1] [See below, p. 388.]

[2] [The first paragraph of § 23 here is the first paragraph of § 13 in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), where Ruskin added the following note:—

> "I knew nothing of Goethe when I put him with Balzac; but the intolerable dulness which encumbers the depth of Wilhelm Meister, and the cruel reserve which conceals from all but the intensest readers the meaning of Faust, have made him, in a great degree, an evil influence in European literature; and evil is always second-rate."

For other references to Goethe, see *Time and Tide*, § 96 (where *Wilhelm Meister* is

So also in painting, those who are acquainted with the sentimental efforts made at present by the German religious and historical schools, and with the disciplined power and learning of the French, will think it beyond all explanation absurd to call a painter of light water-colour landscapes, eighteen inches by twelve, the first representative of the arts of the age. I can only crave the reader's patience, and his due consideration of the following reasons for my doing so, together with those advanced in the farther course of the work.

§ 24. I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean, by humility, doubt of his own power, or hesitation in speaking his opinions;[1] but a right understanding of the relation between what *he* can do and say, and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it; and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only, they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Dürer writes calmly to one who had found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done;"[2] Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else,—only they do not expect their fellow-men therefore to fall down and worship them; they have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not *in* them, but *through* them; that they could not do or be anything else than God made them. And they see something Divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.

§ 25. Now, I find among the men of the present age, as far as I know them, this character in Scott and Turner

mentioned); *Munera Pulveris*, § 87; *Aratra Pentelici*, § 12 (*Faust*); and *Catalogue of the Educational Series* (where it is said that "Goethe has formed, directly or indirectly, the thoughts of all strong and wise men since his time").]

[1] [Compare what is said on this subject in *Eagle's Nest*, § 30; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 171; *Queen of the Air*, §§ 134, 135.]

[2] [Compare Vol. XI. p. 14 *n.*]

pre-eminently; I am not sure if it is not in them alone. I do not find Scott talking about the dignity of literature, nor Turner about the dignity of painting. They do their work, feeling that they cannot well help it; the story must be told, and the effect put down; and if people like it, well and good; and if not, the world will not be much the worse.

I believe a very different impression of their estimate of themselves and their doings will be received by any one who reads the conversations of Wordsworth or Goethe. The *slightest* manifestation of jealousy or self-complacency is enough to mark a second-rate character of the intellect; and I fear that, especially in Goethe, such manifestations are neither few nor slight.

§ 26. Connected with this general humility, is the total absence of affectation in these men,—that is to say, of any assumption of manner or behaviour in their work, in order to attract attention. Not but that they are mannerists both. Scott's verse is strongly mannered, and Turner's oil painting; but the manner of it necessitated by the feelings of the men, entirely natural to both, never exaggerated for the sake of show. I hardly know any other literary or pictorial work of the day which is not in some degree affected. I am afraid Wordsworth was often affected in his simplicity, and De Balzac in his finish. Many fine French writers are affected in their reserve, and full of stage tricks in placing of sentences. It is lucky if in German writers we ever find so much as a sentence without affectation. I know no painters without it, except one or two Pre-Raphaelites (chiefly Holman Hunt), and some simple water-colour painters, as William Hunt, William Turner of Oxford, and the late George Robson;[1] but these last have no invention, and therefore by our fourth canon, Chap. III. § 21, are excluded from the first rank of artists; and of the

[1] [For Holman Hunt, see Vol. XII. pp. 324–335. For William Hunt, see General Index; for Turner of Oxford, *Academy Notes*, 1856, 1858, 1859; for Robson, Vol. I. p. 193 *n.*]

Pre-Raphaelites there is here no question, as they in no wise represent the modern school.

§ 27. Again: another very important, though not infallible, test of greatness is, as we have often said, the appearance of Ease with which the thing is done.[1] It may be that, as with Dante and Leonardo, the finish given to the work effaces the evidence of ease; but where the ease is manifest, as in Scott, Turner, and Tintoret, and the thing done is very noble, it is a strong reason for placing the men above those who confessedly work with great pains. Scott writing his chapter or two before breakfast—not retouching; Turner finishing a whole drawing in a forenoon before he goes out to shoot[2] (providing always the chapter and drawing be good), are instantly to be set above men who confessedly have spent a day over the work, and think the hours well spent if it has been a little mended between sunrise and sunset. Indeed, it is no use for men to think to appear great by working fast, dashing, and scrawling; the thing they do must be good and great, cost what time it may; but if it *be* so, and they have honestly and unaffectedly done it with *no effort*, it is probably a greater and better thing than the result of the hardest efforts of others.

§ 28. Then, as touching the kind of work done by these two men, the more I think of it I find this conclusion more impressed upon me,—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion, —all in one.

Therefore, finding the world of Literature more or less divided into Thinkers and Seers, I believe we shall find also that the Seers are wholly the greater race of the two. A true Thinker who has practical purpose in his thinking,

[1] [See, for instance, Vol. III. p. 122; Vol. IV. p. 283; Vol. XII. p. 344. And compare, with special reference to Scott, *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 23.]

[2] [See *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 55, Vol. XII. p. 386.]

and is sincere, as Plato, or Carlyle, or Helps,[1] becomes in some sort a seer, and must be always of infinite use in his generation; but an affected Thinker, who supposes his thinking of any other importance than as it tends to work, is about the vainest kind of person that can be found in the occupied classes. Nay, I believe that metaphysicians and philosophers are, on the whole, the greatest troubles the world has got to deal with; and that while a tyrant or bad man is of some use in teaching people submission or indignation, and a thoroughly idle man is only harmful in setting an idle example, and communicating to other lazy people his own lazy misunderstandings, busy metaphysicians are always entangling *good* and *active* people, and weaving cobwebs among the finest wheels of the world's business; and are as much as possible, by all prudent persons, to be brushed out of their way, like spiders, and the meshed weed that has got into the Cambridgeshire canals, and other such impediments to barges and business. And if we thus clear the metaphysical element out of modern literature, we shall find its bulk amazingly diminished, and the claims of the remaining writers, or of those whom we have thinned by this abstraction of their straw stuffing, much more easily adjusted.*

§ 29. Again: the mass of sentimental literature, concerned with the analysis and description of emotion, headed by the poetry of Byron, is altogether of lower rank than the literature which merely describes what it saw. The true Seer always feels as intensely as any one else; but he does not much describe his feelings. He tells you whom he met, and what they said; leaves you to make

* Observe, I do not speak thus of metaphysics because I have no pleasure in them. When I speak contemptuously of philology, it may be answered me, that I am a bad scholar; but I cannot be so answered touching metaphysics, for every one conversant with such subjects may see that I have strong inclination that way, which would, indeed, have led me far astray long ago, if I had not learned also some use of my hands, eyes, and feet.

[1] [For Ruskin's admiration of Helps, see Vol. XI. p. 153 *n.*]

out, from that, what they feel, and what he feels, but goes into little detail. And, generally speaking, pathetic writing and careful explanation of passion are quite easy, compared with this plain recording of what people said and did, or with the right invention of what they are likely to say and do; for this reason, that to invent a story, or admirably and thoroughly tell any part of a story, it is necessary to grasp the entire mind of every personage concerned in it, and know precisely how they would be affected by what happens; which to do requires a colossal intellect: but to describe a separate emotion delicately, it is only needed that one should feel it oneself; and thousands of people are capable of feeling this or that noble emotion, for one who is able to enter into all the feelings of somebody sitting on the other side of the table. Even, therefore, where this sentimental literature is first-rate, as in passages of Byron, Tennyson, and Keats, it ought not to be ranked so high as the Creative; and though perfection, even in narrow fields, is perhaps as rare as in the wider, and it may be as long before we have another *In Memoriam* as another *Guy Mannering*, I unhesitatingly receive as a greater manifestation of power the right invention of a few sentences spoken by Pleydell and Mannering across their supper-table,[1] than the most tender and passionate melodies of the self-examining verse.

§ 30. Having, therefore, cast metaphysical writers out of our way, and sentimental writers into the second rank, I do not think Scott's supremacy among those who remain will any more be doubtful; nor would it, perhaps, have been doubtful before, had it not been encumbered by innumerable faults and weaknesses. But it is pre-eminently in these faults and weaknesses that Scott is the representative of the mind of his age; and because he is the greatest man born amongst us, and intended for the enduring type of us, all our principal faults must be laid on

[1] [Chapters xxxiv., xlix.]

his shoulders, and he must bear down the dark marks to the latest ages; while the smaller men, who have some special work to do, perhaps not so much belonging to this age as leading out of it to the next, are often kept providentially quit of the encumbrances which they had not strength to sustain, and are much smoother and pleasanter to look at, in their way: only that is a smaller way.

§ 31. Thus, the most startling fault of the age being its faithlessness, it is necessary that its greatest man should be faithless. Nothing is more notable or sorrowful in Scott's mind than its incapacity of steady belief in anything. He cannot even resolve hardily to believe in a ghost, or a water-spirit; always explains them away in an apologetic manner, not believing, all the while, even in his own explanation. He never can clearly ascertain whether there is anything behind the arras but rats; never draws sword, and thrusts at it for life or death; but goes on looking at it timidly, and saying, "It must be the wind." He is educated a Presbyterian, and remains one, because it is the most sensible thing he can do if he is to live in Edinburgh; but he thinks Romanism more picturesque, and profaneness more gentlemanly; does not see that anything affects human life but love, courage, and destiny; which are, indeed, not matters of faith at all, but of sight. Any gods but those are very misty in outline to him; and when the love is laid ghastly in poor Charlotte's coffin; and the courage is no more of use,—the pen having fallen from between the fingers; and destiny is sealing the scroll,—the God-light is dim in the tears that fall on it.[1]

He is in all this the epitome of his epoch.

§ 32. Again: as another notable weakness of the age is its habit of looking back, in a romantic and passionate idleness, to the past ages, not understanding them all the while, nor really desiring to understand them, so Scott gives up nearly the half of his intellectual power to a fond, yet

[1] [For Scott's feelings on the death of his wife, in 1826, see Lockhart's *Life*, ch. 70.]

purposeless, dreaming over the past, and spends half his literary labours in endeavours to revive it, not in reality, but on the stage of fiction; endeavours which were the best of the kind that modernism made, but still successful only so far as Scott put, under the old armour, the everlasting human nature which he knew; and totally unsuccessful, so far as concerned the painting of the armour itself, which he knew *not*. The excellence of Scott's work is precisely in proportion to the degree in which it is sketched from present nature. His familiar life is inimitable; his quiet scenes of introductory conversation, as the beginning of *Rob Roy* and *Redgauntlet*, and all his living Scotch characters, mean or noble, from Andrew Fairservice to Jeanie Deans, are simply right, and can never be bettered. But his romance and antiquarianism, his knighthood and monkery, are all false, and he knows them to be false; does not care to make them earnest; enjoys them for their strangeness, but laughs at his own antiquarianism, all through his own third novel,—with exquisite modesty indeed, but with total misunderstanding of the function of an Antiquary. He does not see how anything is to be got out of the past but confusion, old iron on drawing-room chairs, and serious inconvenience to Dr. Heavysterne.[1]

§ 33. Again: more than any age that had preceded it, ours had been ignorant of the meaning of the word "Art." It had not a single fixed principle, and what unfixed principles it worked upon were all wrong. It was necessary that Scott should know nothing of art. He neither cared for painting nor sculpture, and was totally incapable of forming a judgment about them. He had some confused love of Gothic architecture, because it was dark, picturesque, old, and like nature; but could not tell the worst

[1] [See ch. iii. of *The Antiquary*. For other references to Andrew Fairservice in *Rob Roy*, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 65 and 92; *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, §§ 29 *seq.*, 14 *seq.*; and *Præterita*, i. ch. iii. § 71 *n.*, iii. ch. iv. § 71 *n.* And for Jeanie Deans, *Fors*, Letters 42, 91, 92; *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 113; *Pleasures of England*, § 98; and *Præterita*, ii. ch. xii. § 231.]

from the best, and built for himself perhaps the most incongruous and ugly pile that gentlemanly modernism ever designed;[1] marking, in the most curious and subtle way, that mingling of reverence with irreverence which is so striking in the age; he reverences Melrose, yet casts one of its piscinas, puts a modern steel grate into it, and makes it his fireplace. Like all pure moderns, he supposes the Gothic barbarous, notwithstanding his love of it; admires, in an equally ignorant way, totally opposite styles; is delighted with the new town of Edinburgh; mistakes its dulness for purity of taste, and actually compares it, in its deathful formality of street, as contrasted with the rudeness of the old town, to Britomart taking off her armour.[2]

§ 34. Again: as in reverence and irreverence, so in levity and melancholy, we saw that the spirit of the age was strangely interwoven. Therefore, also, it is necessary that Scott should be light, careless, unearnest, and yet eminently sorrowful. Throughout all his work there is no evidence of any purpose but to while away the hour. His life had no other object than the pleasure of the instant, and the establishing of a family name. All his thoughts were, in their outcome and end, less than nothing, and vanity. And yet, of all poetry that I know, none is so sorrowful as Scott's. Other great masters are pathetic in a resolute and predetermined way, when they choose; but, in their own minds, are evidently stern or hopeful, or serene; never really melancholy. Even Byron is rather sulky and desperate than melancholy; Keats is sad because he is sickly; Shelley because he is impious; but Scott is inherently and consistently sad. Around all his power, and brightness, and enjoyment of eye and heart, the far-away Æolian knell is for ever sounding; there is not one of those loving or laughing glances of his but it is brighter for the film of tears; his mind is like one of his own hill

[1] [Compare on this subject Vol. I. p. 163 *n.*]
[2] [*Marmion:* Introduction to Canto v.]

rivers,—it is white, and flashes in the sun fairly, careless, as it seems, and hasty in its going, but

> "Far beneath, where slow they creep
> From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
> Where alders moist, and willows weep,
> You hear her streams repine." [1]

Life begins to pass from him very early; and while Homer sings cheerfully in his blindness, and Dante retains his courage, and rejoices in hope of Paradise, through all his exile, Scott, yet hardly past his youth, lies pensive in the sweet sunshine and among the harvests of his native hills.

> "Blackford, on whose uncultured breast,
> Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
> A truant boy, I sought the nest,
> Or listed as I lay at rest,
> While rose on breezes thin
> The murmur of the city crowd,
> And, from his steeple jangling loud,
> St. Giles's mingling din!
> Now, from the summit to the plain,
> Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
> And on the landscape as I look,
> Naught do I see unchanged remain,
> Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook;
> To me they make a heavy moan
> Of early friendships past and gone." [2]

§ 35. Such, then, being the weaknesses which it was necessary that Scott should share with his age, in order that he might sufficiently represent it, and such the grounds for supposing him, in spite of all these weaknesses, the greatest literary man whom that age produced, let us glance at the principal points in which his view of landscape differs from that of the mediævals.

I shall not endeavour now, as I did with Homer and Dante, to give a complete analysis of all the feelings which appear to be traceable in Scott's allusions to landscape scenery,—for this would require a volume,—but only to

[1] [*Marmion*, iv. 10.]
[2] [*Ibid.*, iv. 24.]

indicate the main points of differing character between his temper and Dante's. Then we will examine in detail, not the landscape of literature, but that of painting, which must, of course, be equally, or even in a higher degree, characteristic of the age.

§ 36. And, first, observe Scott's habit of looking at nature neither as dead, or merely material, in the way that Homer regards it, nor as altered by his own feelings, in the way that Keats and Tennyson regard it, but as having an animation and pathos of *its own*, wholly irrespective of human presence or passion, — an animation which Scott loves and sympathises with, as he would with a fellow-creature, forgetting himself altogether, and subduing his own humanity before what seems to him the power of the landscape.

> "Yon lonely Thorn,—would he could tell
> The changes of his parent dell,
> Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
> Waved in each breeze a sapling bough:
> Would he could tell, how deep the shade
> A thousand mingled branches made,
> How broad the shadows of the oak,
> How clung the rowan to the rock,
> And through the foliage show'd his head,
> With narrow leaves and berries red!"[1]

Scott does not dwell on the grey stubbornness of the thorn, because he himself is at that moment disposed to be dull or stubborn; neither on the cheerful peeping forth of the rowan, because he himself is at that moment cheerful or curious: but he perceives them both with the kind of interest that he would take in an old man or a climbing boy; forgetting himself, in sympathy with either age or youth.

> "And from the grassy slope he sees
> The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
> Where issuing from her darksome bed,
> She caught the morning's eastern red,

[1] [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto ii.]

> And through the softening vale below
> Roll'd her bright waves in rosy glow,
> All blushing to her bridal bed,
> Like some shy maid, in convent bred;
> While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay
> Sing forth her nuptial roundelay."[1]

Is Scott, or are the persons of his story, gay at this moment? Far from it. Neither Scott nor Risingham is happy, but the Greta is; and all Scott's sympathy is ready for the Greta, on the instant.

§ 37. Observe, therefore, this is not *pathetic* fallacy; for there is no passion in *Scott* which alters nature. It is not the lover's passion, making him think the larkspurs are listening for his lady's foot; it is not the miser's passion, making him think that dead leaves are falling coins;[2] but it is an inherent and continual habit of thought, which Scott shares with the moderns in general, being, in fact, nothing else than the instinctive sense which men must have of the Divine presence, not formed into distinct belief. In the Greek it created, as we saw, the faithfully believed gods of the elements;[3] in Dante and the mediævals, it formed the faithfully believed angelic presence: in the modern, it creates no perfect form, does not apprehend distinctly any Divine being or operation; but only a dim, slightly credited animation in the natural object, accompanied with great interest and affection for it. This feeling is quite universal with us, only varying in depth according to the greatness of the heart that holds it; and in Scott, being more than usually intense, and accompanied with infinite affection and quickness of sympathy, it enables him to conquer all tendencies to the pathetic fallacy, and, instead of making Nature anywise subordinate to himself, he makes himself subordinate to *her*—follows her lead simply—does not venture to bring his own cares and thoughts

[1] [*Rokeby*, ii. 16.]
[2] [See above, p. 219 *n.*]
[3] [See above, p. 224.]

into her pure and quiet presence—paints her in her simple and universal truth, adding no result of momentary passion or fancy, and appears, therefore, at first shallower than other poets, being in reality wider and healthier. "What am I?" he says continually, "that I should trouble this sincere nature with my thoughts. I happen to be feverish and depressed, and I could see a great many sad and strange things in those waves and flowers; but I have no business to see such things. Gay Greta! sweet harebells! *you* are not sad nor strange to most people; you are but bright water and blue blossoms; you shall not be anything else to me, except that I cannot help thinking you are a little alive,—no one can help thinking that." And thus, as Nature is bright, serene, or gloomy, Scott takes her temper, and paints her as she is; nothing of himself being ever intruded, except that far-away Æolian tone, of which he is unconscious; and sometimes a stray syllable or two, like that about Blackford Hill,[1] distinctly stating personal feeling, but all the more modestly for that distinctness, and for the clear consciousness that it is not the chiming brook, nor the cornfields, that are sad, but only the boy that rests by them; so returning on the instant to reflect, in all honesty, the image of Nature, as she is meant by all men to be received; nor that in fine words, but in the first that come; nor with comment of far-fetched thoughts, but with easy thoughts, such as all sensible men ought to have in such places, only spoken sweetly; and evidently also with an undercurrent of more profound reflection, which here and there murmurs for a moment, and which, I think, if we choose, we may continually pierce down to, and drink deeply from, but which Scott leaves us to seek, or shun, at our pleasure.[2]

§ 38. And in consequence of this unselfishness and humility, Scott's enjoyment of Nature is incomparably

[1] [See above, § 34.]

[2] [In looking back to this chapter in after years Ruskin rated more highly the influence of national scenery on Scott: see *Fors Clavigera,* Letter 92 (1883) *ad fin.*]

greater than that of any other poet I know. All the rest carry their cares to her, and begin maundering in her ears about their own affairs. Tennyson goes out on a furzy common, and sees it is calm autumn sunshine, but it gives him no pleasure. He only remembers that it is

> "Dead calm in that noble breast
> Which heaves but with the heaving deep."[1]

He sees a thundercloud in the evening, and *would* have "doted and pored" on it, but cannot, for fear it should bring the ship bad weather. Keats drinks the beauty of nature violently; but has no more real sympathy with her than he has with a bottle of claret. His palate is fine; but he "bursts joy's grape against it,"[2] gets nothing but misery, and a bitter taste of dregs, out of his desperate draught.

Byron and Shelley are nearly the same, only with less truth of perception, and even more troublesome selfishness. Wordsworth is more like Scott, and understands how to be happy, but yet cannot altogether rid himself of the sense that he is a philosopher, and ought always to be saying something wise. He has also a vague notion that nature would not be able to get on well without Wordsworth; and finds a considerable part of his pleasure in looking at himself as well as at her. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. "I, Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing; but these crags, and heaths, and clouds, how great they are, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, only for their own silent, thoughtless sake!"

§ 39. This pure passion for nature in its abstract being, is still increased in its intensity by the two elements above taken notice of,—the love of antiquity, and the love of colour and beautiful form, mortified in our streets, and seeking for food in the wilderness and the ruin: both feelings,

[1] [*In Memoriam*, xi.; and for the next reference, see *ibid.* xv.]
[2] [*Ode to Melancholy.*]

observe, instinctive in Scott from his childhood, as everything that makes a man great is always.

> "And well the lonely infant knew
> Recesses where the wallflower grew,
> And honeysuckle loved to crawl
> Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
> I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
> The sun in all its round survey'd." [1]

Not that these could have been instinctive in a child in the Middle Ages. The sentiments of a people increase or diminish in intensity from generation to generation,—every disposition of the parents affecting the frame of the mind in their offspring; the soldier's child is born to be yet more a soldier, and the politician's to be still more a politician; even the slightest colours of sentiment and affection are transmitted to the heirs of life; and the crowning expression of the mind of a people is given when some infant of highest capacity, and sealed with the impress of this national character, is born where providential circumstances permit the full development of the powers it has received straight from Heaven, and the passions which it has inherited from its fathers.

§ 40. This love of ancientness, and that of natural beauty, associate themselves also in Scott with the love of liberty, which was indeed at the root even of all his Jacobite tendencies in politics. For, putting aside certain predilections about landed property, and family name, and "gentlemanliness" in the club sense of the word,—respecting which I do not now inquire whether they were weak or wise,—the main element which makes Scott like Cavaliers better than Puritans is, that he thinks the former *free* and *masterful* as well as loyal: and the latter *formal* and *slavish*. He is loyal, not so much in respect for law, as in unselfish love for the king; and his sympathy is quite as ready for any active borderer who breaks the law, or fights the king, in

[1] [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto iii.]

what Scott thinks a generous way, as for the king himself. Rebellion of a rough, free, and bold kind he is always delighted by; he only objects to rebellion on principle and in form: bareheaded and open-throated treason he will abet to any extent, but shrinks from it in a peaked hat and starched collar: nay, politically, he only delights in kingship itself, because he looks upon it as the head and centre of liberty; and thinks that, keeping hold of a king's hand, one may get rid of the cramps and fences of law; and that the people may be governed by the whistle, as a Highland clan on the open hill-side, instead of being shut up into hurdled folds or hedged fields, as sheep or cattle left masterless.

§ 41. And thus Nature becomes dear to Scott in a threefold way; dear to him, first, as containing those remains or memories of the past, which he cannot find in cities, and giving hope of Prætorian mound or knight's grave, in every green slope and shade of its desolate places;—dear, secondly, in its moorland liberty, which has for him just as high a charm as the fenced garden had for the mediæval;

> "For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
> A self-will'd imp—a grandame's child:
> But, half a plague, and half a jest,
> Was still endured, beloved, caressed.
> For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
> The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
> Nay, Erskine, nay. On the wild hill
> Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
> Cherish the tulip, prune the vine;
> But freely let the woodbine twine,
> And leave untrimm'd the eglantine:"[1]

—and dear to him, finally, in that perfect beauty, denied alike in cities and in men, for which every modern heart had begun at last to thirst, and Scott's, in its freshness and power, of all men's, most earnestly.

§ 42. And in this love of beauty, observe, that (as I said

[1] [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto iii.]

we might expect[1]) the love of *colour* is a leading element, his healthy mind being incapable of losing, under any modern false teaching, its joy in brilliancy of hue. Though not so subtle a colourist as Dante, which, under the circumstances of the age, he could not be, he depends quite as much upon colour for his power or pleasure. And, in general, if he does not mean to say much about things, the *one* character which he will give is colour, using it with the most perfect mastery and faithfulness, up to the point of possible modern perception. For instance, if he has a sea-storm to paint in a single line, he does not, as a feebler poet would probably have done, use any expression about the temper or form of the waves; does not call them angry or mountainous. He is content to strike them out with two dashes of Tintoret's favourite colours:[2]

> "*The blackening wave is edged with white,*
> To inch and rock the seamews fly."[3]

There is no form in this. Nay, the main virtue of it is, that it gets rid of all form. The dark raging of the sea—what form has that? But out of the cloud of its darkness those lightning flashes of the foam, coming at their terrible intervals—you need no more.

Again: where he has to describe tents mingled among oaks, he says nothing about the form of either tent or tree, but only gives the two strokes of colour:

> "Thousand pavilions, *white as snow,*
> *Chequered* the borough moor below,
> Oft giving way, where still there stood
> Some relics of the old oak wood,
> That darkly huge did intervene,
> *And tamed the glaring white with green.*"[4]

[1] [See above, p. 328.]
[2] [See Vol. X. p. xxxv.; Vol. XI. p. 364; Vol. XII. p. 290.]
[3] [*Lay of the Last Minstrel,* vi. 23.]
[4] [*Marmion,* iv. 25.]

Again: of tents at Flodden:

"Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,
To view, afar, the Scottish power,
Encamped on Flodden edge.
The white pavilions made a show,
Like remnants of the winter snow,
Along the dusky ridge." [1]

Again: of trees mingled with dark rocks:

"Until where Teith's young waters roll
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the *sable* strath with *green*,
The chapel of St. Bride was seen." [2]

Again: there is hardly any form, only smoke and colour, in his celebrated description of Edinburgh:

"The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston Bay and Berwick Law:
And, broad between them, rolled
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold." [3]

[1] [*Marmion*, vi. 18.]
[2] [*Lady of the Lake*, iii. 19.]
[3] [*Marmion*, iv. 30.]

I do not like to spoil a fine passage by italicizing it; but observe, the only hints at form, given throughout, are in the somewhat vague words, "ridgy," "massy," "close," and "high"; the whole being still more obscured by modern mystery, in its most tangible form of smoke. But the *colours* are all definite; note the rainbow band of them—gloomy or dusky red, sable (pure black), amethyst (pure purple), green, and gold—a noble chord throughout; and then, moved doubtless less by the smoky than the amethystine part of the group,

> "Fitz Eustace' heart felt closely pent,
> The spur he to his charger lent,
> And raised his bridle hand,
> And making demivolte in air,
> Cried, 'Where's the coward that would not dare
> To fight for such a land?'"[1]

I need not multiply examples: the reader can easily trace for himself, through verse familiar to us all, the force of these colour instincts. I will therefore add only two passages, not so completely known by heart as most of the poems in which they occur.

> "'Twas silence all. He laid him down
> Where purple heath profusely strown,
> And throatwort with its azure bell,
> And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
> There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
> The course of Greta's playful tide;
> Beneath her banks, now eddying dun,
> Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
> As, dancing over rock and stone,
> In yellow light her currents shone,
> Matching in hue the favourite gem
> Of Albin's mountain diadem.
> Then tired to watch the currents play,
> He turned his weary eyes away
> To where the bank opposing show'd
> Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy wood.
> One, prominent above the rest,
> Rear'd to the sun its pale grey breast;
> Around its broken summit grew
> The hazel rude and sable yew;

[1] [*Marmion*, iv. 30.]

A thousand varied lichens dyed
Its waste and weather-beaten side;
And round its rugged basis lay,
By time or thunder rent away,
Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
Were mantled now by verdant thorn." [1]

§ 43. Note, first, what an exquisite chord of colour is given in the succession of this passage. It begins with purple and blue: then passes to gold, or cairngorm colour (topaz colour); then to *pale grey*, through which the yellow passes into black; and the black, through broken dyes of lichen, into green. Note, secondly,—what is indeed so manifest throughout Scott's landscape as hardly to need pointing out,—the love of rocks, and true understanding of their colours and characters, opposed as it is in every conceivable way to Dante's hatred and misunderstanding of them.

I have already traced, in various places, most of the causes of this great difference; namely, first, the ruggedness of northern temper (compare § 8 of the chapter on the Nature of Gothic in the *Stones of Venice*); then the really greater beauty of the northern rocks, as noted when we were speaking of the Apennine limestone; [2] then the need of finding beauty among them, if it were to be found anywhere,—no well-arranged colours being any more to be seen in dress, but only in rock lichens; and, finally, the love of irregularity, liberty, and power springing up in glorious opposition to laws of prosody, fashion, and the five orders.

§ 44. The other passage I have to quote is still more interesting; because it has *no form* in it *at all* except in one word (chalice), but wholly composes its imagery either of colour, or of that delicate half-believed life which we have seen to be so important an element in modern landscape.

"The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees;

[1] [*Rokeby*, iii. 8.]
[2] [See above, p. 297; and for the following references, p. 324, and *Stones of Venice*, Vol. X. pp. 207–208.]

And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain side;
The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love." [1]

Two more considerations are, however, suggested by the above passage. The first, that the love of natural history, excited by the continual attention now given to all wild landscape, heightens reciprocally the interest of that landscape, and becomes an important element in Scott's description, leading him to finish, down to the minutest speckling of breast, and slightest shade of attributed emotion, the portraiture of birds and animals; in strange opposition to Homer's slightly named "sea-crows, who have care of the works of the sea," [2] and Dante's singing-birds of undefined species. Compare carefully a passage too long to be quoted,—the 2nd and 3rd stanzas of Canto VI. of *Rokeby*.

§ 45. The second and the last point I have to note, is Scott's habit of drawing a slight *moral* from every scene, just enough to excuse to his conscience his want of definite religious feeling; and that this slight moral is almost always melancholy. Here he has stopped short without entirely expressing it—

"The mountain shadows .
. . . . lie
Like future joys to Fancy's eye."

[1] [*Lady of the Lake*, iii. 2.]
[2] [See above, p. 235; and for "Dante's singing-birds," *Purgatorio*, xxviii. 14–18.]

His completed thought would be, that those future joys, like the mountain shadows, were never to be attained. It occurs fully uttered in many other places. He seems to have been constantly rebuking his own worldly pride and vanity, but never purposefully:

"The foam-globes on her eddies ride,
Thick as the schemes of human pride
That down life's current drive amain,
As frail, as frothy, and as vain."

"Foxglove, and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride."

"Her dark eye flashed; she paused, and sighed;—
'Ah what have I to do with pride!'"[1]

And hear the thought he gathers from the sunset (noting first the Turnerian colour,—as usual, its principal element):

"The sultry summer day is done.
The western hills have hid the sun,
But mountain peak and village spire
Retain reflection of his fire.
Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
To those that gaze from Toller Hill;
Distant and high, the tower of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows;
And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold array'd,
Streaks yet awhile the closing shade:
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.
Thus, aged men, full loath and slow,
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o'er
Till Memory lends her light no more."[2]

That is, as far as I remember, one of the most finished pieces of sunset he has given; and it has a woful moral; yet one which, with Scott, is inseparable from the scene.

Hark again:

"'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;

[1] [*Rokeby*, ii. 7; *Lady of the Lake*, i. 12; vi. 9.]
[2] [*Rokeby*, v. 1.]

And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake and mountain's side,
To say, 'Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey.'" [1]

And again, hear Bertram:

"Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wild wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night." [2]

In all places of this kind, where a passing thought is suggested by some external scene, that thought is at once a slight and sad one. Scott's deeper moral sense is marked in the *conduct* of his stories, and in casual reflections or exclamations arising out of their plot, and therefore sincerely uttered; as that of Marmion:

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!" [3]

But the reflections which are founded, not on events, but on scenes, are, for the most part, shallow, partly insincere, and, as far as sincere, sorrowful. This habit of ineffective dreaming and moralizing over passing scenes, of which the earliest type I know is given in Jaques, is, as aforesaid,[4] usually the satisfaction made to our modern consciences for the want of a sincere acknowledgment of God in nature: and Shakspere has marked it as the characteristic of a mind "compact of jars" (Act II. Sc. VII., *As You Like It*). That description attaches but too accurately to all the moods which we have traced in the moderns generally, and in Scott as the first representative of them; and the question now is, what this love of landscape, so composed, is likely to lead us to, and what use can be made of it.

[1] [*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto ii.]
[2] [*Rokeby*, vi. 21.]
[3] [*Marmion*, vi. 27.]
[4] [See above, p. 252.]

We began our investigation, it will be remembered, in order to determine whether landscape-painting was worth studying or not. We have now reviewed the three principal phases of temper in the civilized human race, and we find that landscape has been mostly disregarded by great men, or cast into a second place, until now; and that now it seems dear to us, partly in consequence of our faults, and partly owing to accidental circumstances, soon, in all likelihood, to pass away: and there seems great room for question still, whether our love of it is a permanent and healthy feeling, or only a healthy crisis in a generally diseased state of mind. If the former, society will for ever hereafter be affected by its results; and Turner, the first great landscape-painter, must take a place in the history of nations corresponding in art accurately to that of Bacon in philosophy;[1]—Bacon having first opened the study of the laws of material nature, when, formerly, men had thought only of the laws of human mind; and Turner having first opened the study of the aspect of material nature, when, before, men had thought only of the aspect of the human form. Whether, therefore, the love of landscape be trivial and transient, or important and permanent, it now becomes necessary to consider. We have, I think, data enough before us for the solution of the question, and we will enter upon it, accordingly, in the following chapter.

[1] [See below, p. 387, and compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 101, Vol. XII. p. 128.]

CHAPTER XVII

THE MORAL OF LANDSCAPE

§ 1. Supposing then the preceding conclusions correct, respecting the grounds and component *elements* of the pleasure which the moderns take in landscape, we have here to consider what are the probable or usual *effects* of this pleasure. Is it a safe or a seductive one? May we wisely boast of it, and unhesitatingly indulge it? or is it rather a sentiment to be despised when it is slight, and condemned when it is intense; a feeling which disinclines us to labour, and confuses us in thought; a joy only to the inactive and the visionary, incompatible with the duties of life, and the accuracies of reflection?

§ 2. It seems to me that, as matters stand at present, there is considerable ground for the latter opinion. We saw, in the preceding chapter, that our love of nature had been partly forced upon us by mistakes in our social economy, and led to no distinct issues of action or thought. And when we look to Scott—the man who feels it most deeply—for some explanation of its effect upon him, we find a curious tone of apology (as if for an involuntary folly) running through his confessions of such sentiment, and a still more curious inability to define, beyond a certain point, the character of this emotion. He has lost the company of his friends among the hills, and turns to these last for comfort. He says, "there is a pleasure in the pain" consisting in such thoughts

> "As oft awake
> By lone St. Mary's silent lake;"

ut when we look for some definition of these thoughts, ll that we are told is, that they compose

> "A mingled sentiment
> 'Twixt resignation and content;" *

sentiment which, I suppose, many people can attain to n the loss of their friends, without the help of lakes r mountains; while Wordsworth definitely and positively firms that *thought* has nothing whatever to do with the natter, and that though, in his youth, the cataract and ood "haunted him like a passion," it was without the lp of any "remoter charm, by thought supplied."[1]

§ 3. There is not, however, any question but that both cott and Wordsworth are here mistaken in their analysis their feelings. Their delight, so far from being without ought, is more than half made up of thought, but of ought in so curiously languid and neutralized a condition at they cannot trace it. The thoughts are beaten to a wder so small that they know not what they are; they ow only that in such a state they are not good for much, d disdain to call them thoughts. But the way in which ought, even thus broken, acts in producing the delight ill be understood by glancing back to §§ 9 and 10 of the nth chapter, in which we observed the power of the agination in exalting any visible object, by gathering und it, in farther vision, all the facts properly connected ith it; this being, as it were, a spiritual or second sight, ultiplying the power of enjoyment according to the lness of the vision. For, indeed, although in all lovely ature there is, first, an excellent degree of simple beauty, ldressed to the eye alone, yet often what impresses us ost will form but a very small portion of that visible

* *Marmion,* Introduction to Canto II.

[1] [*Tintern Abbey:* see Vol. III. p. 671, and Vol. IV. p. 74, where the passage is so cited.]

beauty. That beauty may, for instance, be composed
lovely flowers and glittering streams, and blue sky a
white clouds; and yet the thing that impresses us mo
and which we should be sorriest to lose, may be a th
grey film on the extreme horizon, not so large, in the spa
of the scene it occupies, as a piece of gossamer on a nea
at-hand bush, nor in any wise prettier to the eye than t
gossamer; but, because the gossamer is known by us for
little bit of spider's work, and the other grey film is know
to mean a mountain ten thousand feet high, inhabited b
a race of noble mountaineers, we are solemnly impressed b
the aspect of it; and yet, all the while, the thoughts a
knowledge which cause us to receive this impression a
so obscure that we are not conscious of them; we thin
we are only enjoying the visible scene; and the very me
whose minds are fullest of such thoughts absolutely den
as we have just heard, that they owe their pleasure t
anything but the eye, or that the pleasure consists in an
thing else than "Tranquillity."

§ 4. And observe, farther, that this comparative Dimne
and Untraceableness of the thoughts which are the sourc
of our admiration, is not a *fault* in the thoughts, at such
time. It is, on the contrary, a necessary condition of the
subordination to the pleasure of Sight. If the though
were more distinct we should not *see* so well; and begi
ning definitely to think, we must comparatively cease t
see. In the instance just supposed, as long as we look a
the film of mountain or Alp, with only an obscure conscio
ness of its being the source of mighty rivers, that co
sciousness adds to our sense of its sublimity; and if w
have ever seen the Rhine or the Rhone near their mouth
our knowledge, so long as it is only obscurely suggeste
adds to our admiration of the Alp; but once let the ide
define itself,—once let us begin to consider seriously *wha*
rivers flow from that mountain, to trace their source, an
to recall determinately our memories of their distant aspec
—and we cease to behold the Alp; or, if we still behold i

is only as a point in a map which we are painfully design-
ng, or as a subordinate object which we strive to thrust
side, in order to make room for our remembrances of
Avignon or Rotterdam.

Again: so long as our idea of the multitudes who in-
abit the ravines at the foot remains indistinct, that idea
omes to the aid of all the other associations which in-
rease our delight. But let it once arrest us, and entice
s to follow out some clear course of thought respecting
he causes of the prosperity or misfortune of the Alpine
illagers, and the snowy peak again ceases to be visible, or
olds its place only as a white spot upon the retina, while
e pursue our meditations upon the religion or the political
conomy of the mountaineers.

§ 5. It is thus evident that a curiously balanced con-
ition of the powers of mind is necessary to induce full
dmiration of any natural scene. Let those powers be
hemselves inert, and the mind vacant of knowledge, and
estitute of sensibility; and the external object becomes
ttle more to us than it is to birds or insects; we fall
nto the temper of the clown. On the other hand, let the
easoning powers be shrewd in excess, the knowledge vast,
r sensibility intense, and it will go hard but that the visible
bject will suggest so much that it shall be soon itself for-
otten, or become, at the utmost, merely a kind of keynote
o the course of purposeful thought. Newton, probably, did
ot perceive whether the apple which suggested his medita-
ions on gravity was withered or rosy; nor could Howard
e affected by the picturesqueness of the architecture which
eld the sufferers it was his occupation to relieve.[1]

§ 6. This wandering away in thought from the thing
een to the business of life, is not, however, peculiar to
nen of the highest reasoning powers, or most active bene-
olence. It takes place more or less in nearly all persons
f average mental endowment. They see and love what

[1] [The reference is to John Howard, the prison reformer, who in the course of his travels inspected the Bastille and all the principal prisons both in Great Britain and in France, Italy, etc. : see his place in the list below, p. 360.]

is beautiful, but forget their admiration of it in followin some train of thought which it suggested, and which is more personal interest to them. Suppose that three or fou persons come in sight of a group of pine-trees, not havin seen pines for some time.[1] One, perhaps an engineer, i struck by the manner in which their roots hold the groun and sets himself to examine their fibres, in a few minute retaining little more consciousness of the beauty of th trees than if he were a rope-maker untwisting the strand of a cable: to another, the sight of the trees calls up som happy association, and presently he forgets them, and pur sues the memories they summoned: a third is struck b certain groupings of their colours, useful to him as an artist which he proceeds immediately to note mechanically fo future use, with as little feeling as a cook setting down th constituents of a newly discovered dish; and a fourth, im pressed by the wild coiling of boughs and roots, will begi to change them in his fancy into dragons and monsters and lose his grasp of the scene in fantastic metamorphosis while, in the mind of the man who has most the powe of contemplating the thing itself, all these perceptions an trains of idea are partially present, not distinctly, but in a mingled and perfect harmony. He will not see the colour of the tree so well as the artist, nor its fibres so well a the engineer; he will not altogether share the emotion o the sentimentalist, nor the trance of the idealist; but fancy and feeling, and perception, and imagination, will all ob scurely meet and balance themselves in him, and he wil see the pine-trees somewhat in this manner:

> "Worthier still of note
> Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
> Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
> Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
> Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
> Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
> That threaten the profane; a pillared shade,

[1] [For the early draft of this passage, see Appendix v., pp. 438–439.]

Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially,—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked
With unrejoicing berries, ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton,
And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship." [1]

§ 7. The power, therefore, of thus fully *perceiving* any natural object depends on our being able to group and fasten all our fancies about it as a centre, making a garland of thoughts for it, in which each separate thought is subdued and shortened of its own strength, in order to fit it for harmony with others; the intensity of our enjoyment of the object depending, first, on its own beauty, and then on the richness of the garland. And men who have this habit of clustering and harmonizing their thoughts are a little too apt to look scornfully upon the harder workers who tear the bouquet to pieces to examine the stems. This was the chief narrowness of Wordsworth's mind; he could not understand that to break a rock with a hammer in search of crystal may sometimes be an act not disgraceful to human nature, and that to dissect a flower may sometimes be as proper as to dream over it; whereas all experience goes to teach us, that among men of average intellect the most useful members of society are the dissectors, not the dreamers. It is not that they love nature or beauty less, but that they love result, effect, and progress more; and when we glance broadly along the starry crowd of benefactors to the human race, and guides of human thought, we shall find that this dreaming love of natural beauty—or at least its expression—has been more or less checked by them all, and subordinated either to hard work or watching of *human* nature. Thus in all the classical and mediæval periods, it was, as we have seen,

[1] [Wordsworth: *Yew Trees;* a portion of the passage is quoted at Vol. IV. p. 293.]

subordinate to agriculture, war, and religion; and in the modern period, in which it has become far more powerful, observe in what persons it is chiefly manifested.[1]

(1.) It is subordinate in	(2.) It is intense in
Bacon.	Mrs. Radcliffe.
Milton.	St. Pierre.
Johnson.	Shenstone.
Richardson.	Byron.
Goldsmith.	Shelley.
Young.	Keats.
Newton.	Burns.
Howard.	Eugene Sue.
Fénelon.	George Sand.
Pascal.	Dumas.

§ 8. I have purposely omitted the names of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Scott, in the second list, because, glancing at the two columns as they now stand, we may, I think, draw some useful conclusions from the high honourableness and dignity of the names on one side, and the comparative slightness of those on the other, — conclusions which may help us to a better understanding of Scott and Tennyson themselves. Glancing, I say, down those columns in their present form, we shall at once perceive that the intense love of nature is, in modern times, characteristic of persons not of the first order of intellect, but of brilliant imagination, quick sympathy, and undefined religious principle, suffering also usually under strong and ill-governed passions: while in the same individual it will be found to vary at different periods, being, for the most part, strongest in youth, and associated with force of emotion, and with indefinite and feeble powers of thought; also, throughout life, perhaps developing itself most at times when the mind is slightly unhinged by love, grief, or some other of the passions.

[1] [In his copy for revision Ruskin wrote against list No. (2)—"Add Rousseau, and say why I named Dumas (landscape of Monte Cristo), and quote a Frenchman's comparison of Sand with Homer, and say why chosen, all."]

§ 9. But, on the other hand, while these feelings of delight in natural objects cannot be construed into signs of the highest mental powers, or purest moral principles, we see that they are assuredly indicative of minds above the usual standard of power, and endowed with sensibilities of great preciousness to humanity; so that those who find themselves entirely destitute of them, must make this want a subject of humiliation, not of pride. The apathy which cannot perceive beauty is very different from the stern energy which disdains it; and the coldness of heart which receives no emotion from external nature, is not to be confounded with the wisdom of purpose which represses emotion in action. In the case of most men, it is neither acuteness of the reason, nor breadth of humanity, which shields them from the impressions of natural scenery, but rather low anxieties, vain discontents, and mean pleasures: and for one who is blinded to the works of God by profound abstraction or lofty purpose, tens of thousands have their eyes sealed by vulgar selfishness, and their intelligence crushed by impious care.

Observe, then: we have, among mankind in general, the three orders of being;—the lowest, sordid and selfish, which neither sees nor feels; the second, noble and sympathetic, but which sees and feels without concluding or acting; the third and highest, which loses sight in resolution, and feeling in work.*

* The investigation of this subject becomes, therefore, difficult beyond all other parts of our inquiry, since precisely the same sentiments may arise in different minds from totally opposite causes; and the extreme of frivolity may sometimes for a moment desire the same things as the extreme of moral power and dignity. In the following extract from *Marriage*,[1] the sentiment expressed by Lady Juliana (the ineffably foolish and frivolous heroine of the story,) is as nearly as possible what Dante would have felt under the same circumstances:—

"The air was soft and genial; not a cloud stained the bright azure of the heavens; and the sun shone out in all his splendour, shedding life and beauty even over the desolate heath-clad hills of Glenfern. But, after they had

[1] [By Susan Edmondstone Ferrier (1782–1854), p. 88.]

Thus, even in Scott and Wordsworth themselves, the love of nature is more or less associated with their weaknesses. Scott shows it most in the cruder compositions of his youth, his perfect powers of mind being displayed only in dialogues with which description has nothing whatever to do. Wordsworth's distinctive work was a war with pomp and pretence, and a display of the majesty of simple feelings and humble hearts, together with high reflective truth in his analysis of the courses of politics and ways of men; without these, his love of nature would have been comparatively worthless.[1]

§ 10. "If this be so, it is not well to encourage the observance of landscape, any more than other ways of dreamily and ineffectually spending time?"

Stay a moment. We have hitherto observed this love

journeyed a few miles, suddenly emerging from the valley, a scene of matchless beauty burst at once upon the eye. Before them lay the dark blue waters of Lochmarlie, reflecting, as in a mirror, every surrounding object, and bearing on its placid, transparent bosom a fleet of herring-boats, the drapery of whose black, suspended nets contrasted with picturesque effect with the white sails of the larger vessels, which were vainly spread to catch a breeze. All around, rocks, meadows, woods, and hills mingled in wild and lovely irregularity.

"Not a breath was stirring, not a sound was heard, save the rushing of the waterfall, the tinkling of some silver rivulet, or the calm rippling of a tranquil lake; now and then, at intervals, the fisherman's Gaelic ditty, chanted as he lay stretched on the sand in some sunny nook; or the shrill, distant sound of childish glee. How delicious to the feeling heart to behold so fair a scene of unsophisticated nature, and to listen to her voice alone, breathing the accents of innocence and joy! But none of the party who now gazed on it had minds capable of being touched with the emotions it was calculated to inspire.

"Henry, indeed, was rapturous in his expressions of admiration; but he concluded his panegyrics by wondering his brother did not keep a cutter, and resolving to pass a night on board one of the herring-boats, that he might eat the fish in perfection.

"Lady Juliana thought it might be very pretty, if, instead of those frightful rocks and shabby cottages, there could be villas, and gardens, and lawns, and conservatories, and summer-houses, and statues.

"Miss Bella observed, if it was hers, she would cut down the woods, and level the hills, and have races."

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[1] [The MS. here adds :—

". . . ; while Tennyson's keen enjoyment of visible beauty belongs to him entirely as a poet of the second or emotional, not the first or creative class, and if he could conceive more he would describe less."]

of natural beauty only as it distinguishes one man from another, not as it acts for good or evil on those minds to which it necessarily belongs. It may, on the whole, distinguish weaker men from stronger men, and yet in those weaker men may be of some notable use. It may distinguish Byron from St. Bernard, and Shelley from Sir Isaac Newton, and yet may, perhaps, be the best thing that Byron and Shelley possess—a saving element in them; just as a rush may be distinguished from an oak by its bending, and yet the bending may be the saving element in the rush, and an admirable gift in its place and way. So that, although St. Bernard journeys all day by the lake of Geneva, and asks at evening "where it is,"[1] and Byron learns by it "to love earth only for its earthly sake,"* it does not follow that Byron, hating men, was the worse for loving the earth, nor that St. Bernard, loving men, was the better or wiser for being blind to it. And this will become still more manifest if we examine somewhat farther into the nature of this instinct, as characteristic especially of youth.

§ 11. We saw above[2] that Wordsworth described the feeling as independent of thought, and, in the particular place then quoted, he *therefore* speaks of it depreciatingly. But in other places he does not speak of it depreciatingly, but seems to think the absence of thought involves a certain nobleness, as in the passage already quoted, Vol. II. p. 108:[3]

> "In such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God
> *Thought* was not."

And he refers to the intense delight which he himself felt, and which he supposes other men feel, in nature, during

* *Childe Harold,* Canto iii. st. 71.

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[1] [For this reference, see Vol. XI. p. 51.]
[2] [Above, p. 355.]
[3] [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 180.]

their thoughtless youth, as an intimation of their immortality, and a joy which indicates their having come fresh from the hand of God.[1]

Now, if Wordsworth be right in supposing this feeling to be in some degree common to all men, and most vivid in youth, we may question if it can be *entirely* explained as I have now tried to explain it. For if it entirely depended on multitudes of ideas, clustering about a beautiful object, it might seem that the youth could not feel it so strongly as the man, because the man knows more, and must have more ideas to make the garland of. Still less can we suppose the pleasure to be of that melancholy and languid kind, which Scott defines as "Resignation" and "Content";[2] boys being not distinguished for either of those characters, but for eager effort and delightsome discontent. If Wordsworth is at all right in this matter, therefore, there must surely be some other element in the feeling not yet detected.

§ 12. Now, in a question of this subtle kind, relating to a period of life when self-examination is rare, and expression imperfect, it becomes exceedingly difficult to trace, with any certainty, the movements of the minds of others, nor always easy to remember those of our own. I cannot, from observation, form any decided opinion as to the extent in which this strange delight in nature influences the hearts of young persons in general; and, in stating what has passed in my own mind, I do not mean to draw any positive conclusion as to the nature of the feeling in other children;[3] but the inquiry is clearly one in which personal experience is the only safe ground to go upon, though a narrow one; and I will make no excuse for talking about

[1] [See the Ode on *Intimations of Immortality*, quoted below, p. 369.]

[2] [See above, p. 355.]

[3] [In the MS. Ruskin here added :—

"I should not have attempted to write this book at all unless I had been myself strongly influenced by the sensation to which Wordsworth and other modern poets refer."

See the passage in *Fors Clavigera* noted above, p. 342, and compare *Præterita*, i. §§ 41, 192, 244 *seq.*]

myself with reference to this subject, because, though there is much egotism in the world, it is often the last thing a man thinks of doing,—and, though there is much work to be done in the world, it is often the best thing a man can do,—to tell the exact truth about the movements of his own mind; and there is this farther reason, that whatever other faculties I may or may not possess, this gift of taking pleasure in landscape I assuredly possess in a greater degree than most men; it having been the ruling passion of my life, and the reason for the choice of its field of labour.

§ 13. The first thing which I remember, as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwent Water; the intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since.[1] Two other things I remember as, in a sort, beginnings of life;—crossing Shapfells (being let out of the chaise to run up the hills), and going through Glenfarg, near Kinross, in a winter's morning, when the rocks were hung with icicles;[2] these being culminating points in an early life of more travelling than is usually indulged to a child. In such journeyings, whenever they brought me near hills, and in all mountain ground and scenery, I had a pleasure, as early as I can remember, and continuing till I was eighteen or twenty, infinitely greater than any which has been since possible to me in anything; comparable for intensity only to the joy of a lover in being near a noble and kind mistress, but no more explicable or definable than that feeling of love itself. Only thus much I can remember, respecting it, which is important to our present subject.

§ 14. First: it was never independent of associated thought. Almost as soon as I could see or hear, I had got

[1] [Compare *Præterita*, i. ch. v. § 107, and see Ruskin's early verses (1830) on Friar's Crag, Vol. II. p. 294, where the monument to him, now erected on the spot, is described in a note.]

[2] [For these reminiscences see Introduction to Vol. XII. (p. xxi.), where, in a letter of 1853, Ruskin recalls some of his "baby verses"; see also *Queen of the Air*, § 112, and the early verses (1827) in Vol. II. p. 262.]

reading enough to give me associations with all kinds of scenery; and mountains, in particular, were always partly confused with those of my favourite book, Scott's *Monastery:* so that Glenfarg and all other glens were more or less enchanted to me, filled with forms of hesitating creed about Christie of the Clint Hill, and the monk Eustace; and with a general presence of White Lady everywhere.[1] I also generally knew, or was told by my father and mother, such simple facts of history as were necessary to give more definite and justifiable association to other scenes which chiefly interested me, such as the ruins of Lochleven and Kenilworth; and thus my pleasure in mountains or ruins was never, even in earliest childhood, free from a certain awe and melancholy, and general sense of the meaning of death, though, in its principal influence, entirely exhilarating and gladdening.

§ 15. Secondly, it was partly dependent on contrast with a very simple and unamused mode of general life; I was born in London, and accustomed, for two or three years, to no other prospect than that of the brick walls over the way;[2] had no brothers nor sisters, nor companions; and though I could always make myself happy in a quiet way, the beauty of the mountains had an additional charm of change and adventure which a country-bred child would not have felt.

§ 16. Thirdly: there was no definite religious feeling mingled with it. I partly believed in ghosts and fairies; but supposed that angels belonged entirely to the Mosaic dispensation, and cannot remember any single thought or feeling connected with them. I believed that God was in heaven, and could hear me and see me; but this gave me neither pleasure nor pain, and I seldom thought of it at all. I never thought of nature as God's work, but as a separate fact or existence.

[1] [See Ruskin's early metrical version of *The Monastery,* Vol. II. pp. 260 *n.*, 276 *n.*]

[2] [See *Præterita,* i. ch. i. § 14, where Ruskin recalls his early years in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square.]

§ 17. Fourthly: it was entirely unaccompanied by powers of reflection or invention. Every fancy that I had about nature was put into my head by some book; and I never reflected about anything till I grew older; and then, the more I reflected, the less nature was precious to me: I could then make myself happy, by thinking, in the dark, or in the dullest scenery; and the beautiful scenery became less essential to my pleasure.

§ 18. Fifthly: it was, according to its strength, inconsistent with every evil feeling, with spite, anger, covetousness, discontent, and every other hateful passion; but would associate itself deeply with every just and noble sorrow, joy, or affection. It had not, however, always the power to repress what was inconsistent with it; and, though only after stout contention, might at last be crushed by what it had partly repressed. And as it only acted by setting one impulse against another, though it had much power in moulding the character, it had hardly any in strengthening it; it formed temperament but never instilled principle; it kept me generally good-humoured and kindly, but could not teach me perseverance or self-denial: what firmness or principle I had was quite independent of it; and it came itself nearly as often in the form of a temptation as of a safeguard, leading me to ramble over hills when I should have been learning lessons, and lose days in reveries which I might have spent in doing kindnesses.

§ 19. Lastly: although there was no definite religious sentiment mingled with it, there was a continual perception of Sanctity in the whole of nature, from the slightest thing to the vastest;—an instinctive awe, mixed with delight; an indefinable thrill, such as we sometimes imagine to indicate the presence of a disembodied spirit. I could only feel this perfectly when I was alone; and then it would often make me shiver from head to foot with the joy and fear of it, when after being some time away from hills, I first got to the shore of a mountain river, where

the brown water circled among the pebbles,[1] or when I first saw the swell of distant land against the sunset, or the first low broken wall, covered with mountain moss. I cannot in the least *describe* the feeling; but I do not think this is my fault, nor that of the English language, for I am afraid, no feeling *is* describable. If we had to explain even the sense of bodily hunger to a person who had never felt it, we should be hard put to it for words; and the joy in nature seemed to me to come of a sort of heart-hunger, satisfied with the presence of a Great and Holy Spirit. These feelings remained in their full intensity till I was eighteen or twenty, and then, as the reflective and practical power increased, and the "cares of this world"[2] gained upon me, faded gradually away, in the manner described by Wordsworth in his *Intimations of Immortality*.[3]

§ 20. I cannot, of course, tell how far I am justified in supposing that these sensations may be reasoned upon as common to children in general. In the same degree they are not of course common, otherwise children would be, most of them, very different from what they are in their choice of pleasures. But, as far as such feelings exist, I apprehend they are more or less similar in their nature and influence; only producing different characters according to the elements with which they are mingled. Thus, a very religious child may give up many pleasures to which its instincts lead it, for the sake of irksome duties; and an inventive child would mingle its love of nature with watchfulness of human sayings and doings; but I believe the feelings I have endeavoured to describe are the pure landscape-instinct; and the likelihoods of good or evil resulting from them may be reasoned upon as generally indicating the usefulness or danger of the modern love and study of landscape.

[1] [See *Præterita*, i. ch. iii. ("The Banks of Tay") § 74.]

[2] [Mark iv. 19.]

[3] [See in illustration of this fading away of the child's "heart-hunger," the passages from Ruskin's letters and diaries cited in Vol. IV. p. xxvi., Vol. IX. p. xxiii., and above, p. xix.]

§ 21. And, first, observe that the charm of romantic association (§ 14) can be felt only by the modern European child. It rises eminently out of the contrast of the beautiful past with the frightful and monotonous present; and it depends for its force on the existence of ruins and traditions, on the remains of architecture, the traces of battle-fields, and the precursorship of eventful history. The instinct to which it appeals can hardly be felt in America, and every day that either beautifies our present architecture and dress, or overthrows a stone of mediæval monument, contributes to weaken it in Europe. Of its influence on the mind of Turner and Prout, and the permanent results which, through them, it is likely to effect, I shall have to speak presently.[1]

§ 22. Again: the influence of surprise in producing the delight, is to be noted, as a suspicious or evanescent element in it. Observe, my pleasure was chiefly (§ 19) when I *first* got into beautiful scenery out of London. The enormous influence of novelty—the way in which it quickens observation, sharpens sensation, and exalts sentiment — is not half enough taken note of by us, and is to me a very sorrowful matter. I think that what Wordsworth speaks of as a glory in the child,[2] because it has come fresh from God's hands, is in reality nothing more than the freshness of all things to its newly opened sight. I find that by keeping long away from hills, I can in great part still restore the old childish feeling about them; and the more I live and work among them, the more it vanishes.

§ 23. This evil is evidently common to all minds; Wordsworth himself mourning over it in the same poem:

> "Custom hangs upon us, with a weight
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life."

[1] [See ch. i. in the next volume ("Of the Turnerian Picturesque"); the passage about Prout (omitted on revision) is in this edition given in a note (Vol. VI. p. 24): compare also Vol. XII. pp. 310–315.]

[2] ["But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy."
Intimations of Immortality, viii. Ruskin alters the first line somewhat.]

And if we grow impatient under it, and seek to recover the mental energy by more quickly repeated and brighter novelty, it is all over with our enjoyment. There is no cure for this evil, any more than for the weariness of the imagination already described,[1] but in patience and rest: if we try to obtain perpetual change, change itself will become monotonous; and then we are reduced to that old despair, "If water chokes, what will you drink after it?" And the two points of practical wisdom in this matter are, first, to be content with as little novelty as possible at a time; and, secondly, to preserve, as much as possible in the world, the sources of novelty.

§ 24. I say, first, to be content with as little change as possible. If the attention is awake, and the feelings in proper train, a turn of a country road, with a cottage beside it, which we have not seen before, is as much as we need for refreshment; if we hurry past it, and take two cottages at a time, it is already too much: hence, to any person who has all his senses about him, a quiet walk along not more than ten or twelve miles of road a day, is the most amusing of all travelling; and all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity. Going by railroad I do not consider as travelling at all; it is merely "being sent" to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel;[2] the next step to it would of course be telegraphic transport, of which, however, I suppose it has been truly said by Octave Feuillet,

"*Il y aurait des gens assez bêtes* pour trouver ça amusant." *

If we walk more than ten or twelve miles, it breaks up the day too much; leaving no time for stopping at the stream sides or shady banks, or for any work at the end

* *Scènes et Proverbes.* La Crise; (Scène en calèche, hors Paris).[3]

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[1] [See above, p. 183.]

[2] [Compare Vol. VIII. p. 159.]

[3] [This was one of the books which Ruskin recommended to Miss Mitford; see his letter to her of July 29, 1854, in a later volume.]

of the day; besides that the last few miles are apt to be done in a hurry, and may then be considered as lost ground. But if, advancing thus slowly, after some days we approach any more interesting scenery, every yard of the changeful ground becomes precious and piquant; and the continual increase of hope, and of surrounding beauty, affords one of the most exquisite enjoyments possible to the healthy mind; besides that real knowledge is acquired of whatever it is the object of travelling to learn, and a certain sublimity given to all places, so attained, by the true sense of the spaces of earth that separate them. A man who really loves travelling would as soon consent to pack a day of such happiness into an hour of railroad, as one who loved eating would agree, if it were possible, to concentrate his dinner into a pill.

§ 25. And, secondly, I say that it is wisdom to preserve as much as possible the innocent *sources* of novelty; —not definite inferiorities of one place to another, if such can be done away; but differences of manners and customs, of language and architecture. The greatest effort ought specially to be made by all wise and far-sighted persons, in the present crisis of civilization, to enforce the distinction between wholesome reform, and heartless abandonment of ancestral custom; between kindly fellowship of nation with nation, and ape-like adoption, by one, of the habits of another. It is ludicrously woeful to see the luxurious inhabitants of London and Paris rushing over the Continent (as they say, to *see* it), and transposing every place, as far as lies in their power, instantly into a likeness of Regent Street and the Rue de la Paix, which they need not certainly have come so far to see. Of this evil I shall have more to say hereafter;[1] meantime I return to our main subject.

§ 26. The next character we have to note in the landscape-instinct (and on this much stress is to be laid), is its

[1] [See in the next volume, ch. xx. § 41; and *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 15.]

total inconsistency with all evil passions; its absolute contrariety (whether in the contest it were crushed or not), to all care, hatred, envy, anxiety, and moroseness. A feeling of this kind is assuredly not one to be lightly repressed, or treated with contempt.

But how, if it be so, the reader asks, can it be characteristic of passionate and unprincipled men, like Byron, Shelley, and such others, and not characteristic of the noblest and most highly principled men?

First, because it is itself a passion, and therefore likely to be characteristic of passionate men. Secondly, because it is (§ 18) wholly a separate thing from moral principle, and may or may not be joined to strength of will, or rectitude of purpose;* only, this much is always observable in the men whom it characterizes, that, whatever their faults or failings, they always understand and love noble qualities of character: they can conceive (if not certain phases of piety), at all events, self-devotion of the highest kind; they delight in all that is good, gracious, and noble; and, though warped often to take delight also in what is dark or degraded, that delight is mixed with bitter self-reproach; or else is wanton, careless, or affected, while their delight in noble things is constant and sincere.

§ 27. Look back to the two lists given above, § 7. I have not lately read anything by Mrs. Radcliffe or George Sand, and cannot, therefore, take instances from them.

* Compare the characters of Fleur de Marie and Rigolette, in the *Mystères de Paris*. I know no other instance in which the two tempers are so exquisitely delineated and opposed. Read carefully the beautiful pastoral, in the eighth chapter of the first Part, where Fleur de Marie is first taken into the fields under Montmartre, and compare it with the sixth of the second Part, its accurately traced companion sketch, noting carefully Rigolette's "Non, *je déteste la campagne.*" She does not, however, dislike flowers or birds; "Cette caisse de bois, que Rigolette appellait le jardin de ses oiseaux, était rempli de terre recouverte de mousse, pendant l'hiver. Elle travaillait auprès de la fenêtre ouverte, à-demi-voilée par un verdoyant rideau de pois de senteur roses, de capucines oranges, de volubilis bleus et blancs."[1]

[1] [Ruskin quotes the *Mystères de Paris* again in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 16.]

Keats hardly introduced human character into his work; but glance over the others, and note the general tone of their conceptions. Take St. Pierre's Virginia, Byron's Myrrha, Angiolina, and Marina, and Eugène Sue's Fleur de Marie; and out of the other list you will only be able to find Pamela, Clementina, and, I suppose, Clarissa,* to put beside them; and these will not more than match Myrrha and Marina; leaving Fleur de Marie and Virginia rivalless. Then meditate a little, with all justice and mercy, over the two groups of names; and I think you will, at last, feel that there is a pathos and tenderness of heart among the lovers of nature in the second list, of which it is nearly impossible to estimate either the value or the danger; that the sterner consistency of the men in the first may, in great part, have arisen only from the, to them, most merciful, appointment of having had religious teaching or disciplined education in their youth; while their want of love for nature, whether that love be originally absent, or artificially repressed, is to none of them an advantage. Johnson's indolence, Goldsmith's improvidence, Young's worldliness, Milton's severity, and Bacon's servility, might all have been less, if they could in anywise have sympathized with Byron's lonely joy in a Jura storm,† or with Shelley's interest in floating paper boats down the Serchio.[1]

§ 28. And then observe, farther, as I kept the names of Wordsworth and Scott out of the second list, I withdrew, also, certain names from the first; and for this reason, that in all the men who are named in that list, there is evidently *some* degree of love for nature, which may have

* I have not read *Clarissa*.[2]

† It might be thought that Young *could* have sympathized with it. He would have made better use of it, but he would not have had the same delight in it. He turns his solitude to good account; but this is because, to him, solitude is sorrow, and his real enjoyment would have been of amiable society, and a place at court.

[1] ["The Boat on the Serchio" (poem of 1821). For Byron's "joy in a Jura storm," see *Childe Harold*, iii. 92.]

[2] [But Ruskin became a great admirer of Richardson: see *Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. § 70; iii. ch. iv. § 66.]

been originally of more power than we suppose, and may have had an infinitely hallowing and protective influence upon them. But there also lived certain men of high intellect in that age who had *no* love of nature whatever. They do not appear ever to have received the smallest sensation of ocular delight from any natural scene, but would have lived happily all their lives in drawing-rooms or studies. And, therefore, in these men we shall be able to determine, with the greatest chance of accuracy, what the real influence of natural beauty is, and what the character of a mind destitute of its love. Take, as conspicuous instances, Le Sage and Smollett,[1] and you will find, in meditating over their works, that they are utterly incapable of conceiving a human soul as endowed with any nobleness whatever; their heroes are simply beasts endowed with some degree of human intellect;—cunning, false, passionate, reckless, ungrateful, and abominable, incapable of noble joy, of noble sorrow, of any spiritual perception or hope. I said, "beasts with human intellect;" but neither Gil Blas nor Roderick Random reaches, morally, anything near the level of dogs; while the delight which the writers themselves feel in mere filth and pain, with an unmitigated foulness and cruelty of heart, is just as manifest in every sentence as the distress and indignation with which pain and injustice are seen by Shelley and Byron.

§ 29. Distinguished from these men by *some* evidence of love for nature, yet an evidence much less clear than that for any of those named even in the first list, stand Cervantes, Pope, and Molière. It is not easy to say how much the character of these last depended on their epoch and education; but it is noticeable that the first two agree thus far in temper with Le Sage and Smollett,—that they delight in dwelling upon vice, misfortune, or folly, as subjects of amusement; while yet they are distinguished from

[1] [For an earlier reference to Smollett, in the same sense (though with recognition of his "magnificent wit and intellect"), see *Letters to a College Friend*, Vol. I. p. 418; see also *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 90, Vol. XII. p. 119, and *Præterita*, i. ch. viii. § 166.]

Le Sage and Smollett by capacity of conceiving nobleness of character, only in a humiliating and hopeless way; the one representing all chivalry as insanity, the other placing the wisdom of man in a serene and sneering reconciliation of good with evil. Of Molière I think very differently. Living in the blindest period of the world's history, in the most luxurious city, and the most corrupted court, of the time, he yet manifests through all his writings an exquisite natural wisdom; a capacity for the most simple enjoyment; a high sense of all nobleness, honour, and purity, variously marked throughout his slighter work, but distinctly made the theme of his two perfect plays—the *Tartuffe* and *Misanthrope;* and in all that he says of art or science he has an unerring instinct for what is useful and sincere, and uses his whole power to defend it, with as keen a hatred of everything affected and vain. And, singular as it may seem, the first definite lesson read to Europe in that school of simplicity of which Wordsworth was the supposed originator among the mountains of Westmorland, was, in fact, given in the midst of the court of Louis XIV., and by Molière. The little canzonet "J'aime mieux ma mie," is, I believe, the first Wordsworthian poem brought forward on philosophical principles, to oppose the schools of art and affectation.[1]

§ 30. I do not know if, by a careful analysis, I could point out any evidences of a capacity for the love of natural scenery in Molière stealing forth through the slightness of his pastorals; but, if not, we must simply set him aside as exceptional, as a man uniting Wordsworth's philosophy with

[1] [So in *Academy Notes*, 1875 (*s.* No. 218), Ruskin mentions Goldsmith and Molière as "having given the first general statements" of the Pre-Raphaelite principle; and in *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 21, he again cites Molière's song as the first expression in literature of the revolt against "the erudite and artificial schools." The song of Alceste—beginning "Si le Roi m'avait donné Paris, sa grande ville"—is in *Le Misanthrope*, Act i. sc. 2. Ruskin's references to Molière are numerous. See, for instance, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 90, where the other side of his attitude towards nature is noticed (Vol. XII. p. 119); *Ethics of the Dust*, § 109, where a "great sentence" of his is quoted; *Aratra Pentelici*, § 89, where *Le Misanthrope* is spoken of as his "most perfect work"; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 34, where his "reasoning and imaginative powers" are said to be "evenly balanced."]

Le Sage's wit, turned by circumstances from the observance of natural beauty to that of human frailty. And thus putting him aside for the moment I think we cannot doubt of our main conclusion, that, though the absence of the love of nature is not an assured condemnation, its presence is an invariable sign of goodness of heart and justness of moral *perception*, though by no means of moral *practice;* that in proportion to the degree in which it is felt, will *probably* be the degree in which all nobleness and beauty of character will also be felt; that when it is originally absent from any mind, that mind is in many other respects hard, worldly, and degraded; that where, having been originally present, it is repressed by art or education, that repression appears to have been detrimental to the person suffering it; and that wherever the feeling exists, it acts for good on the character to which it belongs, though, as it may often belong to characters weak in other respects, it may carelessly be mistaken for a source of evil in them.

§ 31. And having arrived at this conclusion by a review of facts, which, I hope it will be admitted, whether accurate or not, has at least been candid, these farther considerations may confirm our belief in its truth. Observe: the whole force of education, until very lately, has been directed in every possible way to the destruction of the love of nature.[1] The only knowledge which has been considered essential among us is that of words, and, next after it, of the abstract sciences; while every liking shown by children for simple natural history has been either violently checked, (if it took an inconvenient form for the housemaids,) or else scrupulously limited to hours of play: so that it has really been impossible for any child earnestly to study the works of God but against its conscience; and the love of nature has become inherently the characteristic of truants and idlers. While also the art of drawing, which is of more real importance to the human race than that of

[1] [Compare the Appendix on "Modern Education" in *Stones of Venice,* vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 258).]

writing (because people can hardly draw anything without being of some use both to themselves and others, and can hardly write anything without wasting their own time and that of others),—this art of drawing, I say, which on plain and stern system should be taught to every child, just as writing is,—has been so neglected and abused, that there is not one man in a thousand, even of its professed teachers, who knows its first principles; and thus it needs much ill-fortune or obstinacy — much neglect on the part of its teachers, or rebellion on his own—before a boy can get leave to use his eyes or his fingers; so that those who *can* use them are for the most part neglected or rebellious lads—runaways and bad scholars—passionate, erratic, self-willed, and restive against all forms of education; while your well-behaved and amiable scholars are disciplined into blindness and palsy of half their faculties. Wherein here is at once a notable ground for what difference we have observed between the lovers of nature and its despisers; between the somewhat immoral and unrespectable watchfulness of the one, and the moral and respectable blindness of the other.

§ 32. One more argument remains, and that, I believe, an unanswerable one. As, by the accident of education, the love of nature has been, among us, associated with *wilfulness*, so, by the accident of time, it has been associated with *faithlessness*. I traced, above, the peculiar mode in which this faithlessness was indicated; but I never intended to imply, therefore, that it was an invariable concomitant of the love. Because it happens that, by various concurrent operations of evil, we have been led according to those words of the Greek poet already quoted, to "dethrone the gods, and crown the whirlwind,"[1] it is no reason that we should forget there was once a time when "the Lord answered Job *out* of the whirlwind."[2] And if we now take final and full view of the matter, we shall find

[1] [See above, p. 318.]
[2] [Job xxxviii. 1.]

that the love of nature, wherever it has existed, has been a faithful and sacred element of human feeling; that is to say, supposing all circumstances otherwise the same with respect to two individuals, the one who loves nature most will be *always* found to have more *faith in God* than the other. It is intensely difficult, owing to the confusion and counter influences which always mingle in the data of the problem, to make this abstraction fairly; but so far as we can do it, so far, I boldly assert, the result is constantly the same: the nature-worship will be found to bring with it such a sense of the presence and power of a Great Spirit as no mere reasoning can either induce or controvert; and where that nature-worship is innocently pursued, —*i.e.* with due respect to other claims on time, feeling, and exertion, and associated with the higher principles of religion,—it becomes the channel of certain sacred truths, which by no other means can be conveyed.

§ 33. This is not a statement which any investigation is needed to prove. It comes to us at once from the highest of all authority. The greater number of the words which are recorded in Scripture, as directly spoken to men by the lips of the Deity, are either simple revelations of His law, or special threatenings, commands, and promises relating to special events. But two passages of God's speaking, one in the Old and one in the New Testament, possess, it seems to me, a different character from any of the rest, having been uttered, the one to effect the last necessary change in the mind of a man whose piety was in other respects perfect; and the other, as the first statement to all men of the principles of Christianity by Christ Himself—I mean the 38th to 41st chapters of the book of Job, and the Sermon on the Mount. Now the first of these passages is, from beginning to end, nothing else than a direction of the mind which was to be perfected to humble observance of the works of God in nature. And the other consists only in the inculcation of *three* things: 1st, right conduct; 2nd, looking for eternal life; 3rd, trusting God,

through watchfulness of His dealings with His creation;[1] and the entire contents of the book of Job, and of the Sermon on the Mount, will be found resolvable simply into these three requirements from all men,—that they should act rightly, hope for heaven, and watch God's wonders and work in the earth; the right conduct being always summed up under the three heads of *justice*, *mercy*, and *truth*, and no mention of any doctrinal point whatsoever occurring in either piece of divine teaching.

§ 34. As far as I can judge of the ways of men, it seems to me that the simplest and most necessary truths are always the last believed; and I suppose that well-meaning people in general would rather regulate their conduct and creed by almost any other portion of Scripture whatsoever, than by that Sermon on the Mount which contains the things that Christ thought it first necessary for all men to understand. Nevertheless, I believe the time will soon come for the full force of these two passages of Scripture to be accepted. Instead of supposing the love of nature necessarily connected with the faithlessness of the age, I believe it is connected properly with the benevolence and liberty of the age;[2] that it is precisely the most healthy element which distinctively belongs to us; and that out of it, cultivated no longer in levity or ignorance, but in earnestness, and as a duty, results will spring of an importance at present inconceivable; and lights arise, which, for the first time in man's history, will reveal to him the true

[1] [On the landscape of the Book of Job, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 79 (Vol. XII. pp. 105–106).]

[2] [The passage "Instead of supposing . . . his Maker" is § 63 in *Frondes Agrestes* (1875), where Ruskin added the following footnote :—

> "I forget, now, what I meant by 'liberty,' in this passage; but I often used the word in my first writings, in a good sense, thinking of Scott's moorland rambles, and the like. It is very wonderful to me, now, to see what hopes I had once; but Turner was alive, then; and the sun used to shine, and rivers to sparkle."

See for a use of the word liberty "in a good sense," *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. ii. § 15 and *n*. But there and always Ruskin associates freedom and authority, liberty and law: compare *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 138), *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. p. 249).]

nature of his life, the true field for his energies, and the true relations between him and his Maker.

§ 35. I will not endeavour here to trace the various modes in which these results are likely to be effected, for this would involve an essay on education, on the uses of natural history, and the probable future destiny of nations. Somewhat on these subjects I have spoken in other places;[1] and I hope to find time, and proper place, to say more. But one or two observations may be made merely to suggest the directions in which the reader may follow out the subject for himself.

The great mechanical impulses of the age, of which most of us are so proud, are a mere passing fever, half-speculative, half-childish. People will discover at last that royal roads to anything can no more be laid in iron than they can in dust; that there are, in fact, no royal roads to anywhere worth going to; that if there were, it would that instant cease to be worth going to,—I mean, so far as the things to be obtained are in any way estimable in terms of *price*. For there are two classes of precious things in the world: those that God gives us for nothing—sun, air, and life (both mortal life and immortal); and the secondarily precious things which He gives us for a price: these secondarily precious things, worldly wine and milk, can only be bought for definite money; they never can be cheapened. No cheating nor bargaining will ever get a single thing out of nature's "establishment" at half-price. Do we want to be strong?—we must work. To be hungry?—we must starve. To be happy?—we must be kind. To be wise?—we must look and think. No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world

[1] [See, for instance, *Seven Lamps* (Vol. VIII. pp. 159, 259), and *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. ch. iv.; and for places where Ruskin returned to the thoughts here suggested, *Modern Painters*, vol. v., concluding chapter, his Oxford *Lectures on Art*, and, indeed, the greater part of his later writings.]

than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast. And they will at last, and soon too, find out that their grand inventions for conquering (as they think) space and time, do, in reality, conquer nothing; for space and time are, in their own essence, unconquerable, and besides did not want any sort of conquering; they wanted *using*. A fool always wants to shorten space and time: a wise man wants to lengthen both. A fool wants to kill space and kill time: a wise man, first to gain them, then to animate them. Your railroad, when you come to understand it, is only a device for making the world smaller: and as for being able to talk from place to place, that is, indeed, well and convenient; but suppose you have, originally, nothing to say.* We shall be obliged at last to confess, what we should long ago have known, that the really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast; and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going, but in being.

§ 36. "Well; but railroads and telegraphs are so useful for communicating knowledge to savage nations." Yes, if you have any to give them. If you know nothing *but* railroads, and can communicate nothing but aqueous vapour and gunpowder,—what then? But if you have any other thing than those to give, then the railroad is of use only because it communicates that other thing; and the question is—what that other thing may be. Is it religion? I believe if we had really wanted to communicate that, we could have done it in less than 1800 years, without steam. Most of the good religious communication that I remember, has been done on foot; and it cannot be easily done faster than at foot pace. Is it science? But what science—of

* "The light-outspeeding telegraph
Bears nothing on its beam."—Emerson.[1]

See Appendix III., Plagiarism [p. 427].

[1] ["The World Soul," in Emerson's *Poems* (1847).]

motion, meat, and medicine? Well; when you have moved your savage, and dressed your savage, fed him with white bread, and shown him how to set a limb,—what next? Follow out that question. Suppose every obstacle overcome; give your savage every advantage of civilization to the full; suppose that you have put the Red Indian in tight shoes; taught the Chinese how to make Wedgwood's ware, and to paint it with colours that will rub off; and persuaded all Hindoo women that it is more pious to torment their husbands into graves than to burn themselves at the burial,—what next? Gradually, thinking on from point to point, we shall come to perceive that all true happiness and nobleness are near us, and yet neglected by us; and that till we have learned how to be happy and noble we have not much to tell, even to Red Indians. The delights of horse-racing and hunting, of assemblies in the night instead of the day, of costly and wearisome music, of costly and burdensome dress,[1] of chagrined contention for place or power, or wealth, or the eyes of the multitude; and all the endless occupation without purpose, and idleness without rest, of our vulgar world, are not, it seems to me, enjoyments we need be ambitious to communicate. And all real and wholesome enjoyments possible to man have been just as possible to him, since first he was made of the earth, as they are now; and they are possible to him chiefly in peace. To watch the corn grow, and the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over ploughshare or spade; to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray,—these are the things that make men happy; they have always had the power of doing these, they never *will* have power to do more. The world's prosperity or adversity depends upon our knowing and teaching these few things: but upon iron, or glass, or electricity, or steam, in no wise.

§ 37. And I am Utopian and enthusiastic enough to

[1] [For other references to these features of modern life, see *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 26, and *Love's Meinie*, § 133 (hunting); *Lectures on Art*, § 112 (late hours); *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xix. § 6 *n.* (opera); and the General Index (dress).]

believe, that the time will come when the world will discover this.[1] It has now made its experiments in every possible direction but the right one: and it seems that it must, at last, try the right one, in a mathematical necessity. It has tried fighting, and preaching, and fasting, buying and selling, pomp and parsimony, pride and humiliation,—every possible manner of existence in which it could conjecture there was any happiness or dignity: and all the while, as it bought, sold, and fought, and fasted, and wearied itself with policies, and ambitions, and self-denials, God had placed its real happiness in the keeping of the little mosses of the wayside, and of the clouds of the firmament. Now and then a wearied king, or a tormented slave, found out where the true kingdoms of the world were, and possessed himself, in a furrow or two of garden ground, of a truly infinite dominion.[2] But the world would not believe their report, and went on trampling down the mosses, and forgetting the clouds, and seeking happiness in its own way, until, at last, blundering and late, came natural science; and in natural science not only the observation of things, but the finding out of new uses for them. Of course the world, having a choice left to it, went wrong as usual, and thought that these mere material uses were to be the sources of its happiness. It got the clouds packed into iron cylinders, and made them carry its wise self at their own cloud pace. It got weavable fibres out of the mosses, and made clothes for itself, cheap and fine, — here was happiness at last. To go as fast as the clouds, and manufacture everything out of anything, — here was paradise, indeed!

[1] [On Ruskin's Utopianism, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 33 (Vol. XII. p. 56 and *n.*).]

[2] [Ruskin was perhaps thinking of the abdication of the Emperor Charles V. and his cloister life, as described in Sir William Stirling-Maxwell's book; and of Epictetus—

> "That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
> Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
> Clear'd Rome of what most shamed him."—Matthew Arnold.

For a reference to the cloister life of Charles V., see *Academy Notes*, 1856 (No. 175); to Epictetus, Vol. VI. p. 22.]

§ 38. And now, when, in a little while, it is unparadised again, if there were any other mistake that the world could make, it would of course make it. But I see not that there is any other; and, standing fairly at its wits' end, having found that going fast, when it is used to it, is no more paradisiacal than going slow; and that all the prints and cottons in Manchester cannot make it comfortable in its mind, I do verily believe it will come, finally, to understand that God paints the clouds and shapes the moss-fibres, that men may be happy in seeing Him at His work, and that in resting quietly beside Him, and watching His working, and—according to the power He has communicated to ourselves, and the guidance He grants,—in carrying out His purposes of peace and charity among all His creatures, are the only real happinesses that ever were, or will be, possible to mankind.

§ 39. How far art is capable of helping us in such happiness we hardly yet know; but I hope to be able, in the subsequent parts of this work, to give some data for arriving at a conclusion in the matter.[1] Enough has been advanced to relieve the reader from any lurking suspicion of unworthiness in our subject, and to induce him to take interest in the mind and work of the great painter who has headed the landscape school among us. What farther considerations may, within any reasonable limits, be put before him, respecting the effect of natural scenery on the human heart, I will introduce in their proper places either as we examine, under Turner's guidance, the different classes of scenery, or at the close of the whole work; and therefore I have only one point more to notice here, namely, the exact relation between landscape-painting and natural science, properly so called.

§ 40. For it may be thought that I have rashly assumed that the Scriptural authorities above quoted apply to that partly superficial view of nature which is taken by the landscape-painter, instead of to the accurate view taken by the

[1] [See, again, the last chapter of *Modern Painters*, vol. v.]

nan of science. So far from there being rashness in such n assumption, the whole language, both of the book of ob and the Sermon on the Mount, gives precisely the iew of nature which is taken by the uninvestigating affec- ion of a humble, but powerful mind. There is no dissec- ion of muscles or counting of elements, but the boldest and roadest glance at the apparent facts, and the most magni- cent metaphor in expressing them. "His eyes are like he eyelids of the morning. In his neck remaineth strength, nd sorrow is turned into joy before him." And in the ften repeated, never obeyed, command, "Consider the lilies f the field," observe there is precisely the delicate attribu- on of life which we have seen to be the characteristic of ne modern view of landscape, — "They toil not." There no science, or hint of science; no counting of petals, or display of provisions for sustenance; nothing but the xpression of sympathy, at once the most childish, and the ost profound,—"They toil not."[1]

§ 41. And we see in this, therefore, that the instinct hich leads us thus to attribute life to the lowest forms of rganic nature, does not necessarily spring from faithlessness, or the deducing a moral out of them from an irregular nd languid conscientiousness. In this, as in almost all ings connected with moral discipline, the same results ay follow from contrary causes; and as there are a good nd evil contentment, a good and evil discontent, a good nd evil care, fear, ambition, and so on, there are also ood and evil forms of this sympathy with nature, and dispo- tion to moralize over it.* In general, active men, of strong nse and stern principle, do not care to see anything in

* Compare what is said before in various places of good and bad finish, od and bad mystery, etc.[2] If a man were disposed to system-making, he uld easily throw together a counter-system to Aristotle's, showing that in all

[1] [The Bible references in § 40 are Job xli. 18, 22 (see also *Modern Painters*, l. v. pt. ix. ch. x. § 17); Matthew vi. 28 (see also p. 292, above).]

[2] [See, for finish, ch. ix. p. 155, etc.; for mystery, ch. xvi. p. 318, with which ssage contrast Vol. III. p. 123; and for the Aristotelian theory of virtue as a an, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. App. iii.]

a leaf, but vegetable tissue, and are so well convinced of useful moral truth, that it does not strike them as a new or notable thing when they find it in any way symbolized by material nature; hence there is a strong presumption when first we perceive a tendency in any one to regard trees as living, and enunciate moral aphorisms over every pebble they stumble against, that such tendency proceeds from a morbid temperament, like Shelley's, or an inconsistent one, like Jaques's. But when the active life is nobly fulfilled, and the mind is then raised beyond it into clear and calm beholding of the world around us, the same tendency again manifests itself in the most sacred way: the simplest forms of nature are strangely animated by the sense of the Divine presence; the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort, children of God; and we ourselves, their fellows, made out of the same dust, and greater than they only in having a greater portion of the Divine power exerted on our frame, and all the common uses and palpably visible forms of things, become subordinate in our minds to their inner glory,—to the mysterious voices in which they talk to us about God, and the changeful and typical aspects by which they witness to us of holy truth, and fill us with obedient, joyful, and thankful emotion.

§ 42. It is in raising us from the first state of inactive reverie to the second of useful thought, that scientific pursuits are to be chiefly praised. But in restraining us at this second stage, and checking the impulses towards higher contemplation, they are to be feared or blamed. They may in certain minds be consistent with such contemplation; but only by an effort: in their nature they are always adverse to it, having a tendency to chill and subdue the feelings, and to resolve all things into atoms and numbers. For most men, an ignorant enjoyment is better than an informed one; it is better to conceive the

things there were two extremes which exactly resembled each other, but of which one was bad, the other good; and a mean, resembling neither, but better than the one, and worse than the other.

sky as a blue dome than a dark cavity, and the cloud as a golden throne than a sleety mist. I much question whether any one who knows optics, however religious he may be, can feel in equal degree the pleasure or reverence which an unlettered peasant may feel at the sight of a rainbow. And it is mercifully thus ordained, since the law of life, for a finite being, with respect to the works of an infinite one, must be always an infinite ignorance. We cannot fathom the mystery of a single flower, nor is it intended that we should; but that the pursuit of science should constantly be stayed by the love of beauty, and accuracy of knowledge by tenderness of emotion.

§ 43. Nor is it even just to speak of the love of beauty as in all respects unscientific; for there is a science of the aspects of things, as well as of their nature; and it is as much a fact to be noted in their constitution, that they produce such and such an effect upon the eye or heart (as, for instance, that minor scales of sound cause melancholy), as that they are made up of certain atoms or vibrations of matter.

It is as the master of this science of *Aspects*, that I said, some time ago,[1] Turner must eventually be named always with Bacon, the master of the science of *Essence*. As the first poet who has, in all their range, understood the grounds of noble emotion which exist in landscape, his future influence will be of a still more subtle and important character. The rest of this work will therefore be dedicated to the explanation of the principles on which he composed, and of the aspects of nature which he was the first to discern.

[1] [Above, p. 353; see also *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, § 101 (Vol. XII. 128), and compare *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 48 *n.*).]

CHAPTER XVIII

OF THE TEACHERS OF TURNER

§ 1. The first step to the understanding either the mind or position of a great man ought, I think, to be an inquiry into the elements of his early instruction, and the mode in which he was affected by the circumstances of surrounding life. In making this inquiry, with respect to Turner, we shall be necessarily led to take note of the causes which had brought landscape-painting into the state in which he found it; and, therefore, of those transitions of style which it will be remembered, we overleaped (hoping for a future opportunity of examining them) at the close of the fifteenth chapter.

§ 2. And first, I said, it will be remembered, some way back,[1] that the relations between Scott and Turner would probably be found to differ very curiously from those between Dante and Giotto. They differ primarily in this —that Dante and Giotto, living in a consistent age, were subjected to one and the same influence, and may be reasoned about almost in similar terms. But Scott and Turner, living in an inconsistent age, became subjected to inconsistent influences; and are at once distinguished by notable contrarieties, requiring separate examination in each.

§ 3. Of these, the chief was, that Scott, having had the blessing of a totally neglected education, was able early to follow most of his noble instincts; but Turner, having suffered under the instruction of the Royal Academy, had to pass nearly thirty years of his life in recovering from its

[1] [See above, p. 330.]

consequences;* this permanent result following for both,—that Scott never was led into any fault foreign to his nature, but spoke what was in him, in rugged or idle simplicity; erring only where it was natural to err, and failing only where it was impossible to succeed. But Turner, from the beginning, was led into constrained and unnatural error; diligently debarred from every ordinary help to success. The one thing which the Academy *ought* to have taught him (namely, the simple and safe use of oil colour),[1] it never taught him; but it carefully repressed his perceptions of truth, his capacities of invention, and his tendencies of choice. For him it was impossible to do right but in a spirit of defiance; and the first condition of his progress in learning, was the power to forget.

§ 4. One most important distinction in their feelings throughout life was necessitated by this difference in early training. Scott gathered what little knowledge of architecture he possessed, in wanderings among the rocky walls of Crichtoun, Lochleven, and Linlithgow, and among the delicate pillars of Holyrood, Roslin, and Melrose. Turner acquired his knowledge of architecture at the desk, from academical elevations of the Parthenon and St. Paul's; and spent a large portion of his early years in taking views of gentlemen's seats, temples of the Muses, and other productions of modern taste and imagination; being at the same time directed exclusively to classical sources for all information as to the proper subjects of art. Hence, while Scott was at once directed to the history of his native land, and to the Gothic fields of imagination, and his mind was fed in a consistent, natural, and felicitous way from his youth up; poor Turner for a long time knew no inspiration but that

* The education here spoken of is, of course, that bearing on the main work of life. In other respects, Turner's education was more neglected than Scott's, and that not beneficently. See the close of the third of my Edinburgh Lectures. [Vol. XII. p. 133.]

[1] [Compare the Review of Eastlake, § 3, Vol. XII. p. 253.]

of Twickenham;[1] no sublimity but that of Virginia Water. All the history and poetry presented to him at the age when the mind receives its dearest associations, were those of the gods and nations of long ago; and his models of sentiment and style were the worst and last wrecks of the Renaissance affectations.

§ 5. Therefore (though utterly free from affectation), his early works are full of an *enforced* artificialness, and of things ill-done and ill-conceived, because foreign to his own instincts; and, throughout life, whatever he did, because he thought he *ought* to do it, was wrong; all that he planned on any principle, or in supposed obedience to canons of taste, was false and abortive: he only did right when he ceased to reflect; was powerful only when he made no effort, and successful only when he had taken no aim.

§ 6. And it is one of the most interesting things connected with the study of his art, to watch the way in which his own strength of English instinct breaks gradually through fetter and formalism; how from Egerian wells he steals away to Yorkshire streamlets; how from Homeric rocks, with laurels at the top and caves in the bottom, he climbs, at last, to Alpine precipices fringed with pine, and fortified with the slopes of their own ruins; and how from Temples of Jupiter and Gardens of the Hesperides, a spirit in his feet guides him, at last, to the lonely arches of Whitby, and the bleak sands of Holy Isle.

§ 7. As, however, is the case with almost all inevitable evil, in its effect on great minds, a certain good rose even out of this warped education; namely, his power of more completely expressing all the tendencies of his epoch, and sympathizing with many feelings and many scenes which must otherwise have been entirely profitless to him. Scott's mind was just as large and full of sympathy as Turner's; but, having been permitted always to take his own choice

[1] [For "Twickenham" in art, see *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 37 (Vol. XII. p. 373 and *n.*). Turner for some years (1814–1826) had a house at Twickenham—"Sandycombe Lodge": see Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, No. 101.]

among sources of enjoyment, Scott was entirely incapable of entering into the spirit of any classical scene. He was strictly a Goth and a Scot, and his sphere of sensation may be almost exactly limited by the growth of heather. But Turner had been forced to pay early attention to whatever of good and right there was even in things naturally distasteful to him. The charm of early association had been cast around much that to other men would have been tame; while making drawings of flower-gardens and Palladian mansions, he had been taught sympathy with whatever grace or refinement the garden or mansion could display, and to the close of life could enjoy the delicacy of trellis and parterre, as well as the wildness of the wood and the moorland; and watch the staying of the silver fountain at its appointed height in the sky, with an interest as earnest, if not as intense, as that with which he followed the crash of the Alpine cataract into its clouds of wayward rage.

§ 8. The distinct losses to be weighed against this gain are, first the waste of time during youth in painting subjects of no interest whatsoever, — parks, villas, and ugly architecture in general: secondly, the devotion of his utmost strength in later years to meaningless classical compositions, such as the Fall and Rise of Carthage, Bay of Baiæ, Daphne and Leucippus,[1] and such others, which, with infinite accumulation of material, are yet utterly heartless and emotionless, dead to the very root of thought, and incapable of producing wholesome or useful effect on any human mind, except only as exhibitions of technical skill and graceful arrangement: and, lastly, his incapacity, to the close of life, of entering heartily into the spirit of any elevated architecture; for those Palladian and classical buildings which he had been taught that it was right to admire, being wholly devoid of interest, and in their own formality and barrenness quite unmanageable, he was obliged to make them manageable in his pictures by disguising them, and

[1] [For Ruskin's criticism of Turner's classical compositions, see Vol. III. pp. 241–242, and compare *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (Third Period). The particular pictures here referred to are in the National Gallery, Nos. 498, 499, 505, 520.]

to use all kinds of playing shadows and glittering lights to obscure their ugly details; and as in their best state such buildings are white and colourless, he associated the idea of whiteness with perfect architecture generally, and was confused and puzzled when he found it grey. Hence he never got thoroughly into the feeling of Gothic;[1] its darkness and complexity embarrassed him; he was very apt to whiten by way of idealizing it, and to cast aside its details in order to get breadth of delicate light. In Venice, and the towns of Italy generally, he fastened on the wrong buildings, and used those which he chose merely as kind of white clouds, to set off his brilliant groups of boats, or burning spaces of lagoon. In various other minor ways, which we shall trace in their proper place,[2] his classical education hindered or hurt him; but I feel it very difficult to say how far the loss was balanced by the general grasp it gave his mind; nor am I able to conceive what would have been the result, if his aims had been made at once narrower and more natural, and he had been led in his youth to delight in Gothic legends instead of classical mythology; and, instead of the porticoes of the Parthenon, had studied in the aisles of Notre Dame.

§ 9. It is still more difficult to conjecture whether he gathered most good or evil from the pictorial art which surrounded him in his youth. What that art was, and how the European schools had arrived at it, it now becomes necessary briefly to inquire.

It will be remembered that, in the 14th chapter, we left our mediæval landscape (§ 18) in a state of severe formality, and perfect subordination to the interest of figure-subject. I will now rapidly trace the mode and progress of its emancipation.[3]

[1] [Compare, again, *Notes on the Turner Gallery* (*s.* No. 527, 535), and Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* (*s.* 12 n.).]

[2] [See, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. x. § 21; but in a later chapter of that volume (pt. ix. ch. x. § 3 *n.*), Ruskin refers to the present passage, and somewhat modifies it.]

[3] [For another sketch of this subject, see *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, §§ 84–94, Vol. XII. pp. 109–123.]

§ 10. The formalized conception of scenery remained little altered until the time of Raphael, being only better executed as the knowledge of art advanced; that is to say, though the trees were still stiff, and often set one on each side of the principal figures, their colour and relief on the sky were exquisitely imitated, and all groups of near leaves and flowers drawn with the most tender care, and studious botanical accuracy. The better the subjects were painted, however, the more logically absurd they became: a background wrought in Chinese confusion of towers and rivers, was in early times passed over carelessly and forgiven for the sake of its pleasant colour; but it appealed somewhat too far to imaginative indulgence when Ghirlandajo drew an exquisite perspective view of Venice and her lagoons behind an Adoration of the Magi;* and the impossibly small boats which might be pardoned in a mere illumination, representing the miraculous draught of fishes, became, whatever may be said to the contrary, inexcusably absurd in Raphael's fully realized landscape; so as at once to destroy the credibility of every circumstance of the event.

§ 11. A certain charm, however, attached itself to many forms of this landscape, owing to their very unnaturalness, as I have endeavoured to explain already in the last chapter of the second volume, §§ 9 to 12;[1] noting, however, there, that it was in no wise to be made a subject of imitation; a conclusion which I have since seen more and more ground for holding finally. The longer I think over the subject, the more I perceive that the pleasure we take in such unnatural landscapes is intimately connected with our

* The picture is in the Uffizii of Florence.[2]

[1] [In this edition, Vol. IV. pp. 320–323.]

[2] [For another reference to this background, see Vol. IV. p. 323 *n.* Ruskin describes the picture in his diary of 1845:—

"Mentioned by Rio [*Poetry of Christian Art*, p. 105], and all that he says about the distance is not too much. It is a wonderful bit of clear and clever Dutch painting, far in advance of all other distances up to Ghirlandajo's time, as far as mere power of imitation goes; the sky is sweet in colour and infinitely clear and far away, but the whole is a mere piece of Daguerreotype, totally feelingless and unpromising."]

habit of regarding the New Testament as a beautiful poem, instead of a statement of plain facts. He who believes thoroughly that the events are true will expect, and ought to expect, real olive copse behind real Madonna, and no sentimental absurdities in either.

§ 12. Nor am I at all sure how far the delight which we take (when I say *we*, I mean, in general, lovers of old sacred art) in such quaint landscape, arises from its peculiar *falsehood*, and how far from its peculiar *truth*. For as it falls into certain errors more boldly, so, also, what truth it states, it states more firmly, than subsequent work. No engravings, that I know, render the backgrounds of sacred pictures with sufficient care to enable the reader to judge of this matter unless before the works themselves. I have, therefore, engraved on the opposite page, a bit of the background of Raphael's Holy Family, in the Tribune of the Uffizii, at Florence.[1] I copied the trees leaf for leaf, and the rest of the work with the best care I could; the engraver, Mr. Armytage,[2] has admirably rendered the delicate atmosphere which partly veils the distance. Now I do not know how far it is necessary to such pleasure as we receive from this landscape, that the trees should be both so straight and formal in stem, and should have branches no thicker than threads; or that the outlines of the distant hills should approximate so closely to those on any ordinary Wedgwood china pattern. I know that, on the contrary, a great part of the pleasure arises from the sweet expression of air and sunshine; from the traceable resemblance of the city and tower to Florence and Fésole; from the fact that, though the boughs are too thin, the lines of ramification are true and beautiful; and from the expression of continually varied form in the clusters of leafage. And although all lovers of sacred art would shrink in horror from the idea of substituting for such a landscape a bit of Cuyp or Rubens, I do not think that the horror

[1] [The Madonna del Cardellino; see Vol. IV. p. 85.]
[2] [See Vol. IX. p. 1.]

J.Ruskin, after Raphael.

J.C. Armytage
Allen & Co. Sc.

11. Latest Purism.

J. Ruskin del. 1853.

J.M.W. Turner

J. Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc.

12. The Shores of Wharfe.

they feel is because Cuyp and Rubens's landscape is *truer*, but because it is *coarser* and more vulgar in associated idea than Raphael's; and I think it possible that the true forms of hills, and true thicknesses of boughs, might be tenderly stolen into this background of Raphael's without giving offence to any one.

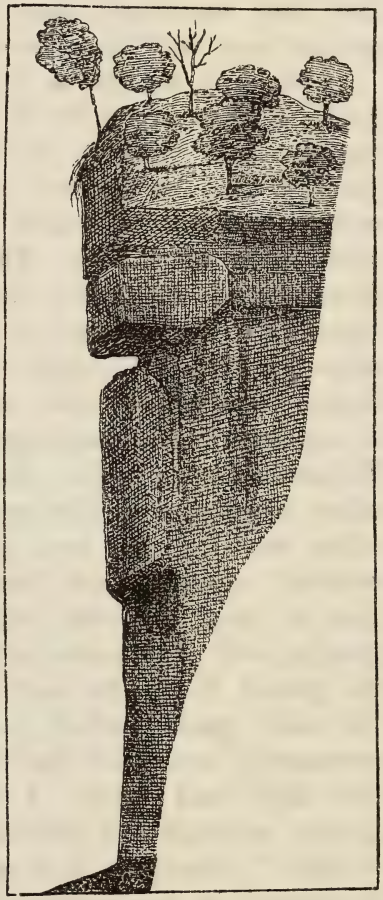


Fig. 5

§ 13. Take a somewhat more definite instance. The rock in Fig. 5, at the side, is one put by Ghirlandajo into the background of his Baptism of Christ.[1] I have no doubt Ghirlandajo's own rocks and trees are better, in several respects, than those here represented, since I have copied them from one of Lasinio's execrable engravings;[2] still, the harsh outline and generally stiff and uninventful blankness of the design are true enough and characteristic of all rock-painting of the period. In the plate opposite I have etched * the outline of a fragment of one of Turner's cliffs, out of his drawing of Bolton Abbey; and it does not seem

* This etching is prepared for receiving mezzotint in the next volume;[3] it is therefore much heavier in line, especially in the water, than I should have made it, if intended to be complete as it is.

[1] [One of the frescoes in S. Maria Novella at Florence, for which generally see *Mornings in Florence*, §§ 17 *seq.*]

[2] [Conte Carlo Lasinio (1757–1839), a prolific engraver of works by the earlier Tuscan painters, and curator of the gallery at Pisa. For other references to his engravings, see Vol. VI. p. 10 *n.*, Vol. XII. p. 245 *n.*]

[3] [Plate 12 A.]

to me that, supposing them properly introduced in the composition, the substitution of the soft natural lines for the hard unnatural ones would make Ghirlandajo's background one whit less sacred.[1]

§ 14. But, be this as it may, the fact is, as ill luck would have it, that profanity of feeling, and skill in art, increased together; so that we do not find the backgrounds rightly painted till the figures become irreligious and feelingless; and hence we associate necessarily the perfect landscape with want of feeling. The first great innovator was either Masaccio or Filippino Lippi; their works are so confused together in the Chapel of the Carmine, that I know not to whom I may attribute,—or whether, without being immediately quarrelled with, and contradicted, I may attribute to anybody,—the landscape background of the fresco of the Tribute Money.[2] But that background, with one or two other fragments in the same chapel, is far in advance of all other work I have seen of the period, in expression of the rounded contours and large slopes of hills, and the association of their summits with the clouds. The opposite engraving will give some better idea of its character than can be gained from the outlines commonly published; though the dark spaces, which in the original are deep blue, come necessarily somewhat too harshly on the eye when translated into light and shade. I shall have occasion to speak with greater speciality of this background in examining the forms of hills;[3] meantime, it is only as an isolated work that it can be named in the history of pictorial progress, for Masaccio died too young to carry out his purposes;[4] and the men

[1] [In the MS. Ruskin gives the Ghirlandajo rock one piece of credit:—

"One truth there is in the thing which seems to me the source of what pleasurableness it possesses, the way the trees stand on the top of the rock, and the grass hangs over it. Nothing is more remarkable of mountain cliffs in general than the way the trees seem to like to look over the edge, and to stretch their branches as far down as they can, more or less following the line of the brow, like hair falling over a forehead. All the early painters seem to have been struck by this, and it is rare with them to draw a rock without some expression of the fact."]

[2] [See the extracts from Ruskin's diary of 1845, given at Vol. III. p. 179 *n.*]

[3] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvii. §§ 50, 51 (Vol. VI. p. 363).]

[4] [See Vol. XII. p. 113 and *n.*]

J. Ruskin after Masaccio. J. H. Le Keux

13. First Mountain Naturalism.

J Ruskin

G Allen
Allen & Co. Sc

14. The Lombard Apennine.

J. Ruskin

Thos Lupton.
Allen & Co. Sc.

15. St. George of the Seaweed.

around him were too ignorant of landscape to understand or take advantage of the little he had done. Raphael, though he borrowed from him in the human figure, never seems to have been influenced by his landscape, and retains either, as in Plate 11, the upright formalities of Perugino; or, by way of being natural, expands his distances into flattish flakes of hill, nearly formless, as in the backgrounds of the Charge to Peter and Draught of Fishes; and thenceforward the Tuscan and Roman schools grew more and more artificial, and lost themselves finally under round-headed niches and Corinthian porticoes.

§ 15. It needed, therefore, the air of the northern mountains and of the sea to brace the hearts of men to the development of the true landscape schools. I sketched by chance one evening the line of the Apennines from the ramparts of Parma, and I have put the rough note of it, and the sky that was over it, in Plate 14, and next to this (Plate 15) a moment of sunset, behind the Euganean hills at Venice. I shall have occasion to refer to both hereafter:[1] but they have some interest here as types of the kind of scenes which were daily set before the eyes of Correggio and Titian, and of the sweet free spaces of sky through which rose and fell, to them, the coloured rays of the morning and evening.

§ 16. And they are connected, also, with the forms of landscape adopted by the Lombardic masters, in a very curious way. We noticed that the Flemings, educated entirely in flat land, seemed to be always contented with the scenery it supplied; and we should naturally have expected that Titian and Correggio, living in the midst of the levels of the lagoons, and of the plain of Lombardy, would also have expressed, in their background, some pleasure in such level scenery, associated, of course, with the sublimity of the far-away Apennine, Euganean, or Alp. But not a whit. The plains of mulberry and maize, of sea and

[1] [See *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. pref. § 3, ch. xx. § 21 (Parma); Plate 15 is not again referred to.]

shoal, by which they were surrounded, never occur in their backgrounds but in cases of necessity; and both of them, in all their important landscapes, bury themselves in wild wood; Correggio delighting to relieve with green darkness of oak and ivy the golden hair and snowy flesh of his figures; and Titian, whenever the choice of a scene was in his power, retiring to the narrow glens and forests of Cadore.

§ 17. Of the vegetation introduced by both, I shall have to speak at length in the course of the chapters on Foliage;[1] meantime, I give in Plate 16 one of Titian's slightest bits of background, from one of the frescoes in the little chapel behind St. Antonio, at Padua,[2] which may be compared more conveniently than any of his more elaborate landscapes with the purist work from Raphael. For in both these examples the trees are equally slender and delicate, only the formality of mediæval art is, by Titian, entirely abandoned, and the old conception of the aspen grove and meadow done away with for ever. We are now far from cities: the painter takes true delight in the desert; the trees grow wild and free; the sky also has lost its peace, and is writhed into folds of motion, closely impendent upon earth, and somewhat threatening, through its solemn light.

§ 18. Although, however, this example is characteristic of Titian in its wildness, it is not so in its *looseness*. It is only in the distant backgrounds of his slightest work, or when he is in a hurry, that Titian is vague: in all his near and studied work he completes every detail with scrupulous care. The next Plate, 17, a background of Tintoret's, from his picture of the Entombment at Parma, is more entirely characteristic of the Venetians. Some mistakes made in the reduction of my drawing during the

[1] [See, for instance, vol. v. pt. vi. ch. v. §§ 5, 8.]

[2] [The Scuola del Santo; for the neglect of these frescoes, see Vol. XII. p. 301. They are among the master's earlier works. The fresco from which Ruskin's drawing is taken represents "St. Anthony of Padua causing a new-born infant to speak"; see illustration of the whole subject at p. 43 of *The Earlier Work of Titian*, by Claude Phillips.]

J Ruskin, after Titian.

J C. Armytage.
Allen & Co. Sc.

16. Early Naturalism.

J Ruskin, after Tintoret.

J.C. Armytage.
Allen & Co. Sc.

17. Advanced Naturalism.

course of engraving have cramped the curves of the boughs and leaves, of which I will give the true outline farther on;[1] meantime the subject, which is that described in § 16 of the chapter on Penetrative Imagination, Vol. II.,[2] will just as well answer the purpose of exemplifying the Venetian love of gloom and wildness, united with perfect definition of detail. Every leaf and separate blade of grass is drawn; but observe how the blades of grass are broken, how completely the aim at expression of faultlessness and felicity has been withdrawn, as contrary to the laws of the existent world.

§ 19. From this great Venetian school of landscape Turner received much important teaching,—almost the only healthy teaching which he owed to preceding art. The designs of the Liber Studiorum are founded first on nature, but in many cases modified by *forced* imitation of Claude, and *fond* imitation of Titian. All the worst and feeblest studies in the book—as the pastoral with the nymph playing the tambourine, that with the long bridge seen through trees, and with the flock of goats on the walled road—owe the principal part of their imbecilities to Claude; another group (Solway Moss, Peat Bog, Lauffenbourg, etc.) is taken, with hardly any modification by pictorial influence, straight from nature; and the finest works in the book—the Grande Chartreuse, Rizpah, Jason, Cephalus, and one or two more —are strongly under the influence of Titian.[3]

§ 20. The Venetian school of landscape expired with Tintoret, in the year 1594; and the sixteenth century closed,

[1] [This, however, was not done.]

[2] [In this edition, Vol. IV. p. 262.]

[3] [The drawing for the "Woman and Tambourine" is No. 468 in the National Gallery; those for the two bridges are Nos. 463 and 464; for the Peat Bog is No. 498, and Lauffenbourg, No. 473: for a notice of the careful symmetry in the last mentioned drawing, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. viii. ch. ii. § 12. For the Chartreuse (drawing, National Gallery, No. 866), see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvi. § 41; vol. v. pt. ix. ch. xi. § 28; and *Lectures on Landscape*, § 98. For Rizpah (drawing, National Gallery, No. 864), see *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 35, Vol. XII. p. 370. For the Jason (drawing, National Gallery, No. 461), see Vol. IV. p. 259. For the Cephalus (drawing, National Gallery, No. 465), see Vol. IV. p. 245, where further references to it are given.]

like a grave, over the great art of the world. There is *no* entirely sincere or great art in the seventeenth century. Rubens and Rembrandt are its two greatest men, both deeply stained by the errors and affectations of their age. The influence of the Venetians hardly extended to them; the tower of the Titianesque art fell southwards, and on the dust of its ruins grew various art-weeds, such as Domenichino and the Carraccis. Their landscape, which may in few words be accurately defined as "Scum of Titian," possesses no single merit, nor any ground for the forgiveness of demerit; they are to be named only as a link through which the Venetian influence came dimly down to Claude and Salvator.

§ 21. Salvator possessed real genius, but was crushed by misery in his youth, and by fashionable society in his age. He had vigorous animal life, and considerable invention, but no depth either of thought or perception. He took some hints directly from nature, and expressed some conditions of the grotesque of terror with original power; but his baseness of thought, and bluntness of sight, were unconquerable; and his works possess no value whatsoever for any person versed in the walks of noble art. They had little, if any, influence on Turner; if any, it was in blinding him for some time to the grace of tree trunks, and making him tear them too much into splinters.

§ 22. Not so Claude, who may be considered as Turner's principal master. Claude's capacities were of the most limited kind; but he had tenderness of perception, and sincerity of purpose, and he affected a revolution in art. This revolution consisted mainly in setting the sun in heaven.* Till Claude's time no one had seriously thought of painting the sun but conventionally; that is to say, as a red or yellow star, (often) with a face in it, under which

* Compare Vol. I. Part II. Sec. I. Chapter VII. I repeat here some things that were then said; but it is necessary now to review them in connection with Turner's education, as well as for the sake of enforcing them by illustration.

type it was constantly represented in illumination; else it was kept out of the picture, or introduced in fragmentary distances, breaking through clouds with almost definite rays. Perhaps the honour of having first tried to represent the real effect of the sun in landscape belongs to Bonifazio, in his pictures of the camps of Israel.* Rubens followed in a kind of bravado, sometimes making the rays issue from anything but the orb of the sun;—here, for instance, Fig. 6, is an outline of the position of the sun (at *s*) with respect

Fig. 6

to his own rays, in a sunset behind a tournament in the Louvre:[1] and various interesting effects of sunlight issuing from the conventional face-filled orb occur in contemporary missal-painting; for instance, very richly in the Harleian MS. Brit. Mus. 3469.[2] But all this was merely indicative of the tendency to transition which may always be traced in any age before the man comes who is to *accomplish* the transition. Claude took up the new idea seriously, made the sun his subject, and painted the effects of misty

* Now in the old library of Venice.[3]

[1] [See Vol. XII. p. 456.]

[2] ["A Book on the Philosopher's Stone in the old German Language: finely written, and most beautifully painted, A.D. 1582. It contains 48 leaves and 22 finely executed paintings. . . . A book of uncommon style and beauty, executed on vellum" (*Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum Bibliothecæ Harleianæ*).]

[3] [For these pictures see also Vol. XI. p. 390.]

shadows cast by his rays over the landscape, and other delicate aerial transitions, as no one had ever done before, and, in some respects, as no one has done in oil colour since.

§ 23. "But, how, if this were so, could his capacities be of the meanest order?" Because doing *one* thing well, or better than others have done it, does not necessarily imply large capacity. Capacity means breadth of glance, understanding of the relations of things, and invention, and these are rare and precious; but there are very few men who have not done *something*, in the course of their lives, better than other people. I could point out many engravers, draughtsmen, and artists, who have each a particular merit in their manner, or particular field of perception, that nobody else has, or ever had. But this does not make them great men, it only indicates a small special capacity of some kind: and all the smaller if the gift be very peculiar and single; for a great man never so limits himself to one thing, as that we shall be able to say, "That is all he can do." If Claude had been a great man he would not have been so steadfastly set on painting effects of sun: he would have looked at all nature, and at all art, and would have painted sun effects somewhat worse, and nature universally much better.

§ 24. Such as he was, however, his discovery of the way to make pictures look warm was very delightful to the shallow connoisseurs of the age. Not that they cared for sunshine; but they liked seeing jugglery. They could not feel Titian's noble colour, nor Veronese's noble composition; but they thought it highly amusing to see the sun brought into a picture: and Claude's works were bought and delighted in by vulgar people then, for their real-looking suns, as pictures are now by vulgar people for having real timepieces in their church towers.

§ 25. But when Turner arose, with an earnest desire to paint the whole of nature, he found that the existence of the sun was an important fact, and by no means an easily

manageable one. *He* loved sunshine for its own sake; but he could not at first paint it. Most things else, he would more or less manage without much technical difficulty; but the burning orb and the golden haze could not, somehow, be got out of the oil paint. Naturally he went to Claude, who really had got them out of oil paint; approached him with great reverence, as having done that which seemed to Turner most difficult of all technical matters, and he became his faithful disciple. How much he learned from him of manipulation, I cannot tell; but one thing is certain, that he never quite equalled him in that particular forte of his. I imagine that Claude's way of laying on oil colour was so methodical that it could not possibly be imitated by a man whose mechanism was interfered with by hundreds of thoughts and aims totally different from Claude's; and, besides, I suppose that certain useful principles in the management of paint, of which our schools are now wholly ignorant, had come down as far as Claude, from the Venetians. Turner at last gave up the attempt, and adopted a manipulation of his own, which indeed effected certain objects attainable in no other way, but which still was in many respects unsatisfactory, dangerous, and deeply to be regretted.

§ 26. But meantime his mind had been strongly warped by Claude's futilities of conception. It was impossible to dwell on such works for any length of time without being grievously harmed by them; and the style of Turner's compositions was for ever afterwards weakened or corrupted. For, truly, it is almost beyond belief into what depth of absurdity Claude plunges continually in his most admired designs. For instance; undertaking to paint Moses at the Burning Bush, he represents a graceful landscape with a city, a river, and a bridge, and plenty of tall trees, and the sea, and numbers of people going about their business and pleasure in every direction; and the bush burning quietly upon a bank in the corner; rather in the dark, and not to be seen without close inspection. It would take

some pages of close writing to point out, one by one, the inanities of heart, soul, and brain which such a conception involves; the ineffable ignorance of the nature of the event, and of the scene of it; the incapacity of conceiving anything, even *in* ignorance, which should be impressive; the dim, stupid, serene, leguminous enjoyment of his sunny afternoon—burn the bushes as much as they liked—these I leave the reader to think over at his leisure, either before the picture in Lord Ellesmere's gallery, or the sketch of it in the Liber Veritatis. But all these kinds of fallacy sprung more or less out of the vices of the time in which Claude lived; his own peculiar character reaches beyond these, to an incapacity of understanding the *main point* in anything he had to represent, down to the minutest detail, which is quite unequalled, as far as I know, in human nugatoriness. For instance; here, in Fig. 7, is the head, with half the body, of Æneas drawing his bow, from No. 180 of the Liber Veritatis.[1] Observe the string is too long by half; for if the bow were unbent, it would be two feet longer than the whole bow. Then the arrow is too long by half, has too heavy a head by half, and finally, it actually is *under* the bow hand, instead of above it. Of the ideal and heroic refinement of the head and drapery I will say nothing; but look only at the wretched archery, and consider if it would be possible for any child to draw the thing with less understanding, or to make more mistakes in the given compass.*

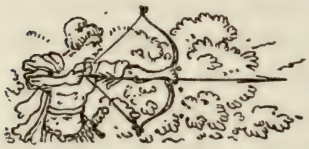


Fig. 7

* My old friend Blackwood[2] complains bitterly, in his last number, of my having given this illustration at one of my late lectures, saying, that I "have a disagreeable knack of finding out the joints in my opponent's armour," and that "I never fight for love." I never do. I fight for truth, earnestly, and

[1] [Compare "Lectures on Colour," Vol. XII. p. 495 and Fig. 29, where another outline of this figure is given for comparison with an archer from an early illuminated manuscript.]

[2] [*Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1855, vol. 78; an article entitled "Modern Light Literature—Art," containing a notice of Ruskin's *Academy Notes* for 1855; the words cited by Ruskin are at pp. 707, 708 of the magazine.]

§ 27. And yet, exquisite as is Claude's instinct for blunder, he has not strength of mind enough to blunder in a wholly original manner, but must needs falter out of his way to pick up other people's puerilities, and be absurd at second-hand. I have been obliged to laugh a little—though I hope reverently—at Ghirlandajo's landscapes, which yet we saw had a certain charm of quaintness in them when contrasted with his grand figures; but could any one have believed that Claude, with all the noble landscapes of Titian set before him, and all nature round about him, should yet go back to Ghirlandajo for types of form? Yet such is the case. I said that the Venetian influence came dimly down to Claude: but the old Florentine influence came clearly. The Claudesque landscape is not, as so commonly supposed, an idealized abstract of the nature about Rome. It is an ultimate condition of the Florentine conventional landscape, more or less softened by reference to nature. Fig. 8, from No. 145 of the Liber Veritatis, is sufficiently characteristic of Claude's rock-drawing; and compared with Fig. 5 (p. 395) above, will show exactly the kind of modification he made on old and received types. We shall see other instances of it hereafter.[1]

Imagine this kind of reproduction of whatever other people had done worst, and this kind of misunderstanding of all that he saw himself in nature, carried out in Claude's trees, rocks, ships, — in everything that he touched,—and then consider what kind of school this work was for a young

in no wise for jest; and against all lies, earnestly, and in no wise for love. They complain that a "noble adversary is not in Mr. Ruskin's way." No; a noble adversary never was, never will be. With all that is noble I have been, and shall be, in perpetual peace; with all that is ignoble and false everlastingly at war. And as for these Scotch *bourgeois gentilshommes*, with their "Tu n'as pas la patience que je pare,"[2] let them look to their fence. But truly, if they will tell me where Claude's strong points are I will strike there, and be thankful.

[1] [See in the next volume, ch. i. § 1, and Plate 18; and ch. xvi. § 35.]

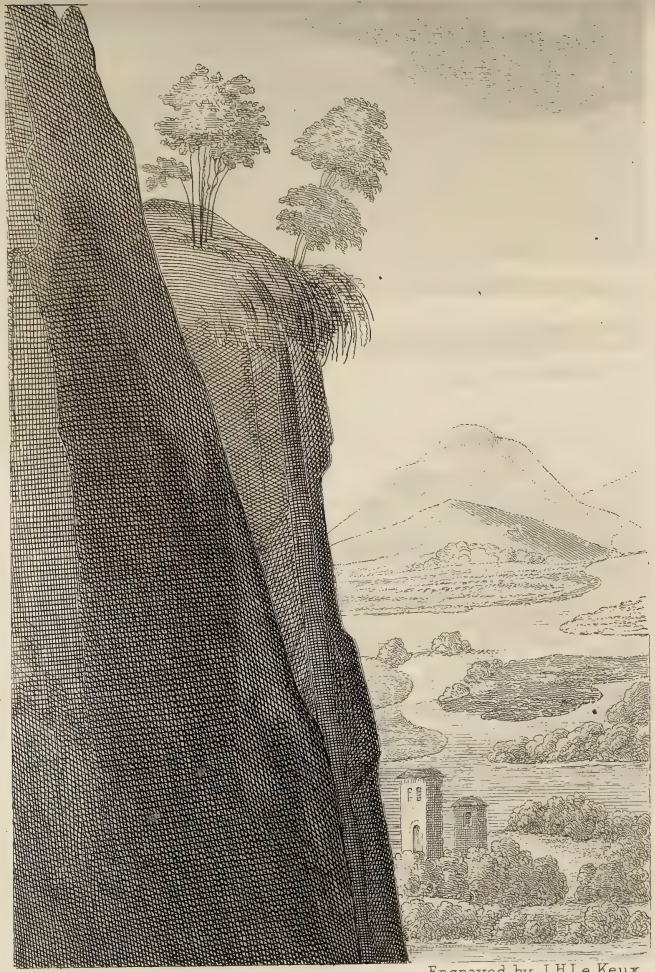
[2] [For Ruskin's references to Molière, see above, p. 375 *n.*; this particular quotation (from a speech of M. Jourdain in act iii. sc. 3 of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) is made again in *Ethics of the Dust*, § 106.]

and reverent disciple. As I said, Turner never recovered the effects of it; his compositions were always mannered, lifeless, and even foolish; and he only did noble things when the immediate presence of nature had overpowered the reminiscences of his master.

Fig. 8

§ 28. Of the influence of Gaspar and Nicolo Poussin on Turner, there is hardly anything to be said, nor much respecting that which they had on landscape generally. Nicolo Poussin had noble powers of design, and might have been a thoroughly great painter had he been trained in Venice; but his Roman education kept him tame; his trenchant severity was contrary to the tendencies of the age, and had few imitators compared to the dashing of Salvator, and the mist of Claude. Those few imitators adopted his manner without possessing either his science or invention; and the Italian school of landscape soon expired. Reminiscences of him occur sometimes in Turner's compositions of sculptured stones for foreground; and the beautiful Triumph of Flora, in the Louvre,[1] probably first showed Turner the use of definite flower, or blossom-painting, in landscape. I doubt if he took anything from Gaspar; whatever he might have learned from him respecting masses of foliage and golden distances, could

[1] [See "Notes on the Louvre," Vol. XII. p. 470.]



Engraved by J.H.Le Keux

17^ Modern and Mediaeval Landscape

have been learned better, and, I believe, *was* learned, from Titian.[1]

§ 29. Meantime, a lower, but more living school had developed itself in the North; Cuyp had painted sunshine as truly as Claude, gilding with it a more homely, but far more honestly conceived landscape; and the effects of light of De Hooghe and Rembrandt presented examples of treatment to which southern art could show no parallel. Turner evidently studied these with the greatest care, and with great benefit in every way; especially this, that they neutralized the idealisms of Claude, and showed the young painter what power might be in plain truth, even of the most familiar kind. He painted several pictures in imitation of these masters; and those in which he tried to rival Cuyp are healthy and noble works, being, in fact, just what most of Cuyp's own pictures are—faithful studies of Dutch boats in calm weather, on smooth water. De Hooghe[2] was too precise, and Rembrandt too dark, to be successfully or affectionately followed by him; but he evidently learned much from both.

§ 30. Finally, he painted many pictures in the manner of Vandevelde (who was the accepted authority of his time in sea painting), and received much injury from him. To the close of his life, Turner always painted the sea too grey, and too opaque, in consequence of his early study of Vandevelde. He never seemed to perceive colour so truly in the sea as he saw it elsewhere. But he soon discovered the poorness of Vandevelde's forms of waves, and raised their meanly divided surfaces into massive surge, effecting rapidly other changes, of which more in another place.[3]

Such was the art to which Turner, in early years, devoted his most earnest thoughts. More or less respectful

[1] [See *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 37, Vol. XII. p. 373.]

[2] [For other references to De Hooghe, always considered by Ruskin among the best of the Dutch masters, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. viii. § 11; *Academy Notes*, 1859, No. 329; *Ariadne Florentina*, § 256; *St. Mark's Rest*, § 200.]

[3] [See *Harbours of England*, §§ 29 *seq.* (Vol. XIII.). For Turner's study of Vandevelde, see again *Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 37, Vol. XII. p. 372; and for his study of Morland, *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, Nos. 468, 477 (Vol. XIII.).]

contemplation of Reynolds, Loutherbourg, Wilson, Gainsborough, Morland, and Wilkie, was incidentally mingled with his graver study; and he maintained a questioning watchfulness of even the smallest successes of his brother artists of the modern landscape school. It remains for us only to note the position of that living school when Turner, helped or misled, as the case may be, by the study of the older artists, began to consider what remained for him to do, or design.

§ 31. The dead schools of landscape, composed of the works we have just been examining, were broadly divisible into northern and southern: the Dutch schools, more or less natural, but vulgar; the Italian, more or less elevated, but absurd. There was a certain foolish elegance in Claude, and a dull dignity in Gaspar; but then their work resembled nothing that ever existed in the world. On the contrary, a canal or cattle piece of Cuyp's had many veracities about it; but they were, at best, truths of the ditch and dairy. The grace of Nature, or her gloom, her tender and sacred seclusions, or her reach of power and wrath, had never been painted; nor had *anything* been painted yet in true *love* of it; for both Dutch and Italians agreed in this, that they always painted for the *picture's* sake, to show how well they could imitate sunshine, arrange masses, or articulate straws, — never because they loved the scene, or wanted to carry away some memory of it.

And thus, all that landscape of the old masters is to be considered merely as a struggle of expiring skill to discover some new direction in which to display itself. There was no love of nature in the age; only a desire for something new. Therefore those schools expired at last, leaving a chasm of nearly utter emptiness between them and the true moderns, out of which chasm the new school rises, not engrafted on that old one, but from the very base of all things, beginning with mere washes of Indian ink, touched upon with yellow and brown; and gradually feeling its way to colour.

But this infant school differed inherently from that ancienter one, in that its motive was love. However feeble its efforts might be, they were *for the sake of the nature*, not of the picture, and therefore, having this germ of true life, it grew and throve. Robson[1] did not paint purple hills because he wanted to show how he could lay on purple; but because he truly loved their dark peaks. Fielding did not paint downs to show how dexterously he could sponge out mists; but because he loved downs.

This modern school, therefore, became the only true school of landscape which has yet existed; the artificial Claude and Gaspar work may be cast aside out of our way, as I have said in my Edinburgh lectures,[2] under the general title of "pastoralism,"—and from the last landscape of Tintoret, if we look for *life*, we must pass at once to the first of Turner.

§ 32. What help Turner received from this or that companion of his youth is of no importance to any one now. Of course every great man is always being helped by everybody,* for his gift is to get good out of all things and all persons; and also there were two men associated with him in early study, who showed high promise in the same field, Cozens and Girtin (especially the former), and there is no saying what these men might have done had they lived; there might, perhaps, have been a struggle between one or other of them and Turner, as between Giorgione and Titian.[3] But they lived not; and Turner is the only great man whom the school has yet produced,—quite great enough, as we shall see, for all that needed to be done.

* His first drawing-master was, I believe, that Mr. Lowe, whose daughters, now aged and poor, have, it seems to me, some claim on public regard, being connected distantly with the memory of Johnson, and closely with that of Turner.[4]

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[1] [For Robson, see Vol. III. p. 193.]

[2] [See Vol. XII. pp. 117–120.]

[3] [For Cozens and Girtin, see Vol. XII. p. 309. "Had Tom Girtin lived," said Turner, "I should have starved" (Thornbury's *Life*, 1877, p. 71).]

[4] [Mauritius Lowe (1746–1793), one of the first students of the Royal Academy, enjoyed the friendship and protection of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who left him a small legacy.]

To him, therefore, we now finally turn, as the sole object of our inquiry. I shall first reinforce, with such additions as they need, those statements of his general principles which I made in the first volume, but could not then demonstrate fully, for want of time to prepare pictorial illustration; and then proceed to examine, piece by piece, his representations of the facts of nature, comparing them, as it may seem expedient, with what had been accomplished by others.

§ 33. I cannot close this volume without alluding briefly to a subject of different interest from any that have occupied us in its pages. For it may, perhaps, seem to a general reader heartless and vain to enter zealously into questions about our arts and pleasures, in a time of so great public anxiety as this.

But he will find, if he looks back to the sixth paragraph of the opening chapter of the last volume, some statement of feelings, which, as they made me despondent in a time of apparent national prosperity, now cheer me in one which, though of stern trial, I will not be so much a coward as to call one of adversity. And I derive this encouragement first from the belief that the war itself, with all its bitterness, is, in the present state of the European nations, productive of more good than evil; and, secondly, because I have more confidence than others generally entertain, in the justice of its cause.[1]

I say, first, because I believe the war is at present productive of good more than of evil.[2] I will not argue this hardly and coldly, as I might, by tracing in past history

[1] [Ruskin often expressed this view, to which his admiration at this time for Napoleon III. in part inclined him (see Vol. XII. p. 55 and *n.*). For other references to the Crimean War, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. Appendix i., § 5; *Academy Notes*, 1856, No. 398; *Love's Meinie*, § 133; *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 83; and *Præterita*, iii. ch. iv. § 79.]

[2] [Compare above, ch. xi. § 8; ch. xvi. § 16 *n.*; pp. 197, 198, 327 *n.* The ethics of war is the one subject on which Ruskin admitted that he had spoken with an uncertain and inconsistent sound; his writings abound alike in praise and in blame of war (see General Index). He explains his dilemma in *The Crown of Wild Olive*, § 161, and *Præterita*, ii. ch. viii. § 151.]

some of the abundant evidence that nations have always reached their highest virtue, and wrought their most accomplished works, in time of straitening and battle; as, on the other hand, no nation ever yet enjoyed a protracted and triumphant peace without receiving in its own bosom ineradicable seeds of future decline. I will not so argue this matter; but I will appeal at once to the testimony of those whom the war has cost the dearest. I know what would be told me, by those who have suffered nothing; whose domestic happiness has been unbroken; whose daily comfort undisturbed; whose experience of calamity consists, at its utmost, in the incertitude of a speculation, the dearness of a luxury, or the increase of demands upon their fortune which they could meet fourfold without inconvenience. From these, I can well believe, be they prudent economists, or careless pleasure-seekers, the cry for peace will rise alike vociferously, whether in street or senate. But I ask *their* witness, to whom the war has changed the aspect of the earth, and imagery of heaven, whose hopes it has cut off like a spider's web, whose treasure it has placed, in a moment, under the seals of clay. Those who can never more see sunrise, nor watch the climbing light gild the Eastern clouds, without thinking what graves it has gilded, first, far down behind the dark earth-line,—who never more shall see the crocus bloom in spring, without thinking what dust it is that feeds the wild flowers of Balaclava. Ask *their* witness, and see if they will not reply that it is well with them and with theirs; that they would have it no otherwise; would not, if they might, receive back their gifts of love and life, nor take again the purple of their blood out of the cross on the breastplate of England. Ask them: and though they should answer only with a sob, listen if it does not gather upon their lips into the sound of the old Seyton war-cry—"Set on."

§ 34. And this not for pride—not because the names of their lost ones will be recorded to all time, as of those who held the breach and kept the gate of Europe against the

North, as the Spartans did against the East; and lay down in the place they had to guard, with the like home message, "Oh, stranger, go and tell the English that we are lying here, having obeyed their words;"[1]—not for this, but because, also, they have felt that the spirit which has discerned them for eminence in sorrow — the helmed and sworded skeleton that rakes with its white fingers the sands of the Black Sea beach into grave-heap after grave-heap, washed by everlasting surf of tears—has been to them an angel of other things than agony; that they have learned, with those hollow, undeceivable eyes of his, to see all the earth by the sunlight of death-beds;—no inch-high stage for foolish griefs and feigned pleasures; no dream, neither, as its dull moralists told them;—*Any*thing but that: a place of true, marvellous, inextricable sorrow and power; a question-chamber of trial by rack and fire, irrevocable decision recording continually; and no sleep, nor folding of hands, among the demon-questioners; none among the angel-watchers, none among the men who stand or fall beside those hosts of God. They know now the strength of sacrifice, and that its flames can illumine as well as consume; they are bound by new fidelities to all that they have saved,—by new love to all for whom they have suffered; every affection which seemed to sink with those dim life-stains into the dust, has been delegated, by those who need it no more, to the cause for which they have expired; and every mouldering arm, which will never more embrace the beloved ones, has bequeathed to them its strength and its faithfulness.

§ 35. For the cause of this quarrel is no dim, half-avoidable involution of mean interests and errors, as some would have us believe. There never was a great war caused by such things. There never can be. The historian may trace it, with ingenious trifling, to a courtier's jest or a woman's glance; but he does not ask—(and it is the sum

[1] [Quoted in the Greek at *Modern Painters,* vol. v. pt. viii. ch. i. § 18; and compare *Crown of Wild Olive,* § 48 (ed. 1 only).]

of questions)—how the warring nations had come to found their destinies on the course of the sneer, or the smile. If they have so based them, it is time for them to learn, through suffering, how to build on other foundations;—for great, accumulated, and most righteous cause, their foot slides in due time; and against the torpor, or the turpitude, of their myriads, there is loosed the haste of the devouring sword and the thirsty arrow. But if they have set their fortunes on other than such ground, then the war must be owing to some deep conviction or passion in their own hearts,—a conviction which, in resistless flow, or reckless ebb, or consistent stay, is the ultimate arbiter of battle, disgrace, or conquest.

§ 36. Wherever there is war, there *must* be injustice on one side or the other, or on both. There have been wars which were little more than trials of strength between friendly nations, and in which the injustice was not to each other, but to the God who gave them life. But in a malignant war of these present ages there is injustice of ignobler kind, at once to God and man, which *must* be stemmed for both their sakes. It may, indeed, be so involved with national prejudices, or ignorances, that neither of the contending nations can conceive it as attaching to their cause; nay, the constitution of their governments, and the clumsy crookedness of their political dealings with each other, may be such as to prevent either of them from knowing the actual cause for which they have gone to war. Assuredly this is, in a great degree, the state of things with *us;* for I noticed that there never came news by telegraph of the explosion of a powder-barrel, or of the loss of thirty men by a sortie, but the Parliament lost confidence immediately in the justice of the war; reopened the question whether we ever should have engaged in it, and remained in a doubtful and repentant state of mind until one of the enemy's powder-barrels blew up also; upon which they were immediately satisfied again that the war was a wise and necessary one. How far, therefore, the calamity may

have been brought upon us by men whose political principles shoot annually like the leaves, and change colour at every autumn frost:—how loudly the blood that has been poured out round the walls of that city, up to the horse-bridles, may now be crying from the ground against men who did not know, when they first bade shed it, exactly what war was, or what blood was, or what life was, or truth, or what anything else was upon the earth; and whose tone of opinions touching the destinies of mankind depended entirely upon whether they were sitting on the right or left side of the House of Commons:—this, I repeat, I know not, nor (in all solemnity I say it) do I care to know. For if it be so, and the English nation could at the present period of its history be betrayed into a war such as this by the slipping of a wrong word into a protocol, or bewitched into unexpected battle under the budding hallucinations of its sapling senators, truly it is time for us to bear the penalty of our baseness, and learn, as the sleepless steel glares close upon us, how to choose our governors more wisely, and our ways more warily. For that which brings swift punishment in war, must have brought slow ruin in peace; and those who have now laid down their lives for England, have doubly saved her; they have humbled at once her enemies and herself; and have done less for her, in the conquest they achieve, than in the sorrow that they claim.

§ 37. But it is not altogether thus: we have not been cast into this war by mere political misapprehensions, or popular ignorances. It is quite possible that neither we nor our rulers may clearly understand the nature of the conflict; and that we may be dealing blows in the dark, confusedly, and as a soldier suddenly awakened from slumber by an unknown adversary. But I believe the struggle was inevitable, and that the sooner it came, the more easily it was to be met, and the more nobly concluded. France and England are both of them, from shore to shore, in a state of intense progression, change, and experimental life. They

are each of them beginning to examine, more distinctly than ever nations did yet in the history of the world, the dangerous question respecting the rights of governed, and the responsibilities of governing, bodies; not, as heretofore, foaming over them in red frenzy, with intervals of fetter and straw crown, but in health, quietness, and daylight, with the help of a good Queen and a great Emperor;[1] and to determine them in a way which, by just so much as it is more effective and rational, is likely to produce more permanent results than ever before on the policy of neighbouring States, and to force, gradually, the discussion of similar questions into their places of silence. To force it,—for true liberty, like true religion, is always aggressive or persecuted; but the attack is *generally* made upon it by the nation which is to be crushed,—by Persian on Athenian, Tuscan on Roman, Austrian on Swiss;[2] or, as now, by Russia upon us and our allies: her attack appointed, it seems to me, for confirmation of all our greatness, trial of our strength, purging and punishment of our futilities, and establishment for ever, in our hands, of the leadership in the political progress of the world.

§ 38. Whether this its providential purpose be accomplished, must depend on its enabling France and England to love one another, and teaching these, the two noblest foes that ever stood breast to breast among the nations, first to decipher the law of international charities; first to discern that races, like individuals, can only reach their true strength, dignity, or joy, in seeking each the welfare, and exulting each in the glory, of the other. It is strange how far we still seem from fully perceiving this. We know that two men, cast on a desert island, could not thrive in dispeace; we can understand that four, or twelve, might still find their account in unity; but that a multitude should

[1] [For Ruskin's opinion of Napoleon III., see above, p. 410 *n.*]

[2] [Ruskin frequently refers to the attacks of the House of Hapsburg on the Forest Cantons, and to the victories of the latter at Morgarten (1315) and Sempach (1386); see, for instance, *Modern Painters*, vol. v., pt. ix. ch. xi. § 31 *n.*; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 95; *Eagle's Nest*, § 199; and *Præterita*, i. ch. vi. § 131.]

thrive otherwise than by the contentions of its classes, or *two* multitudes hold themselves in anywise bound by brotherly law to serve, support, rebuke, rejoice in one another, this seems still as far beyond our conception, as that clearest of commandments, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth,"[1] is beyond our habitual practice. Yet, if once we comprehend that precept in its breadth, and feel that what we now call jealousy for our country's honour, is, so far as it tends to other countries' *dis*honour, merely one of the worst, because most complacent and self-gratulatory, forms of irreligion,—a newly breathed strength will, with the newly interpreted patriotism, animate and sanctify the efforts of men. Learning, unchecked by envy, will be accepted more frankly, throned more firmly, guided more swiftly; charity, unchilled by fear, will dispose the laws of each State, without reluctance to advantage its neighbour by justice to itself; and admiration, unwarped by prejudice, possess itself continually of new treasure in the arts and the thoughts of the stranger.

§ 39. If France and England fail of this, if again petty jealousies or selfish interests prevail to unknit their hands from the armoured grasp, then, indeed, their faithful children will have fallen in vain; there will be a sound as of renewed lamentation along those Euxine waves, and a shaking among the bones that bleach by the mounds of Sebastopol. But if they fail not of this,—if we, in our love of our queens and kings, remember how France gave to the cause of early civilization, first the greatest, then the holiest, of monarchs;* and France, in her love of liberty, remembers how *we* first raised the standard of Commonwealth, trusted to the grasp of one good and strong hand,[2] witnessed for by victory; and so join in perpetual compact of our different strengths, to contend for justice, mercy, and truth throughout the world,

* Charlemagne and St. Louis.

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[1] [1 Corinthians x. 24.]

[2] [For Ruskin's estimate of Cromwell, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 15, 16.]

—who dares say that one soldier has died in vain? The scarlet of the blood that has sealed this covenant will be poured along the clouds of a new aurora, glorious in that Eastern heaven; for every sob of wreck-fed breaker round those Pontic precipices, the floods shall clap their hands[1] between the guarded mounts of the Prince-Angel; and the spirits of those lost multitudes, crowned with the olive and rose among the laurel, shall haunt, satisfied, the willowy brooks and peaceful vales of England, and glide, triumphant, by the poplar groves and sunned coteaux of Seine.

[1] [Psalms xcviii. 8.]

APPENDIX

I. CLAUDE'S TREE-DRAWING

II. GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

III. PLAGIARISM

(Added in this Edition)

IV. A LETTER ON "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. III.

V. ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FROM THE MSS.:—

Magnitude

Moderation

I

CLAUDE'S TREE-DRAWING

The reader may not improbably hear it said, by persons who are incapable of maintaining an honest argument, and, therefore, incapable of understanding or believing the honesty of an adversary, that I have caricatured, or unfairly chosen, the examples I give of the masters I depreciate. It is evident, in the first place, that I could not, if I were even cunningly disposed, adopt a worse policy than in so doing; for the discovery of caricature or falsity in my representations, would not only invalidate the immediate statement, but the whole book; and invalidate it in the most fatal way, by showing that all I had ever said about "truth" was hypocrisy, and that in my own affairs I expected to prevail by help of lies. Nevertheless it necessarily happens, that in endeavours to facsimile any work whatsoever, bad or good, some changes are induced from the exact aspect of the original. These changes are, of course, sometimes harmful, sometimes advantageous; the bad thing generally gains; the good thing *always* loses: so that I am continually tormented by finding, in my plates of contrasts, the virtue and vice I exactly wanted to talk about, eliminated from *both* examples. In some cases, however, the bad thing will lose also, and then I must either cancel the plate, or increase the cost of the work by preparing another (at a similar risk), or run the chance of incurring the charge of dishonest representation. I desire, therefore, very earnestly, and once for all, to have it understood that whatever I say in the text, bearing on questions of comparison, refers *always* to the *original* works; and that, if the reader has it in his power, I would far rather he should look at those works than at my plates of them; I only give the plates for his immediate help and convenience: and I mention this, with respect to my plate of Claude's ramification, because, if I have such a thing as a prejudice at all (and, although I do not myself think I have, people certainly say so), it is against Claude; and I might, therefore, be sooner suspected of some malice in this plate than in others. But I simply gave the original engravings from the Liber Veritatis to Mr. Le Keux, earnestly requesting that the portions selected might be faithfully copied; and I think he is

much to be thanked for so carefully and successfully accomplishing the task. The figures are from the following plates:—

No.	1.	Part of the Central tree in	No. 134 of the Liber Veritatis.
	2.	From the largest tree	„ 158
	3.	Bushes at root of tree	„ 134
	4.	Tree on the left	„ 183
	5.	Tree on the left	„ 95
	6.	Tree on the left	„ 172
	7.	Principal tree	„ 92
	8.	Tree on the right	„ 32

If, in fact, any change be effected in the examples in this plate, it is for the better; for, thus detached, they all look like small boughs, in which the faults are of little consequence; in the original works they are seen to be intended for large trunks of trees, and the errors are therefore pronounced on a much larger scale.

The plate of mediæval rocks (**10**) has been executed with much less attention in transcript, because the points there to be illustrated were quite indisputable, and the instances were needed merely to show the *kind* of *thing* spoken of, not the skill of particular masters. The example from Leonardo was, however, somewhat carefully treated. Mr. Cuff copied it accurately from the only engraving of the picture which, I believe, exists, and with which, therefore, I suppose the world is generally content. That engraving, however, in no respect seems to me to give the look of the light behind Leonardo's rocks; so I afterwards darkened the rocks, and put some light into the sky and lily; and the effect is certainly more like that of the picture than it is in the same portion of the old engraving.

Of the other masters represented in the plates of this volume, the noblest, Tintoret, has assuredly suffered the most (Plate **17**); first, in my too hasty drawing from the original picture; and, secondly, through some accidental errors of outline which occurred in the reduction to the size of the page; lastly, and chiefly, in the withdrawal of the heads of the four figures underneath, in the shadow, on which the composition entirely depends. This last evil is unavoidable. It is quite impossible to make *extracts* from the great masters without partly spoiling every separated feature; the very essence of a noble composition being, that none should bear separation from the rest.

The plate from Raphael (**11**) is, I think, on the whole, satisfactory. It cost me much pains, as I had to facsimile the irregular form of every leaf; each being, in the original picture, executed with a somewhat wayward pencil-stroke of vivid brown on the clear sky.

Of the other plates it would be tedious to speak in detail. Generally, it will be found that I have taken most pains to do justice to the masters of whom I have to speak depreciatingly; and that, if there be calumny at all, it is always of Turner, rather than of Claude.

The reader might, however, perhaps suspect me of ill-will towards Constable, owing to my continually introducing him for depreciatory comparison. So far from this being the case, I had, as will be seen in various passages of the first volume, considerable respect for the feeling with which he worked;[1] but I was compelled to do harsh justice upon him now, because Mr. Leslie, in his unadvised and unfortunate *réchauffé* of the fallacious art-maxims of the last century,[2] had suffered his personal regard for Constable so far to prevail over his judgment as to bring him forward as a great artist, comparable in some kind with Turner. As Constable's reputation was, even before this, most mischievous, in giving countenance to the blotting and blundering of Modernism, I saw myself obliged, though unwillingly, to carry the suggested comparison thoroughly out.

[1] [See particularly Vol. III. p. 45.]

[2] [The reference is to *A Handbook for Young Painters,* by C. R. Leslie, R.A., 1855. Leslie's account of Constable in that book (pp. 273–279) was expressly directed to counteract Ruskin's criticisms in the first volume of *Modern Painters.* The book contained also other criticisms of Ruskin, who replied to them with some asperity in the "Supplement" to his *Academy Notes* of 1855.]

II

GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

THE reader must have noticed that I never speak of German art, or German philosophy, but in depreciation.[1] This, however, is not because I cannot feel, or would not acknowledge, the value and power, within certain limits, of both; but because I also feel that the immediate tendency of the English mind is to rate them too highly; and, therefore, it becomes a necessary task, at present, to mark what evil and weakness there are in them, rather than what good. I also am brought continually into collision with certain extravagances of the German mind, by my own steady pursuit of Naturalism as opposed to Idealism; and, therefore, I become unfortunately cognizant of the evil, rather than of the good; which evil, so far as I feel it, I am bound to declare. And it is not to the point to protest, as the Chevalier Bunsen and other German writers have done, against the expression of opinions respecting their philosophy by persons who have not profoundly or carefully studied it; for the very resolution to study any system of metaphysics profoundly, must be based, in any prudent man's mind, on some preconceived opinion of its worthiness to be studied; which opinion of German metaphysics the naturalistic English cannot be let to form. This is not to be murmured against,—it is in the simple necessity of things. Men who have other business on their hands must be content to choose what philosophy they have occasion for, by the sample; and when, glancing into the second volume of *Hippolytus*,[2] we find the Chevalier Bunsen himself talking of a "finite realization of the infinite" (a phrase considerably less rational than "a black realization of white"), and of a triad composed of God, Man, and

[1] [See, for instance, in this volume, pp. 54, 57, 90, 100, 109, 184, 201, 204 *n.*, 323, 330, 332; and *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. pp. 230, 351); vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 57 *n.*, 325); *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 180 *n.*).]

[2] [See *Hippolytus and his Age*, vol. ii., "The Philosophic Research," 1852, p. 38. For another reference to the phrase, see above, Introduction, p. l.; and vol. iv. ch. iii. § 2 *n.* In one draft Ruskin gives another illustration :—

> "It is impossible to write purer or directer Nonsense. The infinite may be either real or unreal; but to realize it cannot make it finite; if it is realized it must be more infinite than it was before. It would be far more rational to talk of a 'Short Realization of the long,' which, with respect to German sentences, is indeed impossible, but in some sense, when there is anything at all in a long thing to be realized, is more or less possible."]

Humanity * (which is a parallel thing to talking of a triad composed of man, dog, and canineness), knowing those expressions to be pure, definite, and highly finished nonsense, we do not in general trouble ourselves to look any farther. Some one will perhaps answer that if one always judged thus by the sample,—as, for instance, if one judged of Turner's pictures by the head of a figure cut out of one of them,—very precious things might often be despised. Not, I think, often. If any one went to Turner, expecting to learn figure-drawing from him, the sample of his figure-drawing would accurately and justly inform him that he had come to the wrong master.[1] But if he came to be taught landscape, the smallest fragment of Turner's work would justly exemplify his power. It may sometimes unluckily happen that, in such short trial, we strike upon an accidentally failing part of the thing to be tried, and then we may be unjust; but there is, nevertheless, in multitudes of cases, no other way of judging or acting; and the necessity of occasionally being unjust is a law of life,—like that of sometimes stumbling, or being sick. It will not do to walk at snail's pace all our lives for fear of stumbling, nor to spend years in the investigation of everything, which, by specimen, we must condemn. He who seizes all that he plainly discerns to be valuable, and never is unjust but when he honestly cannot help it, will soon be enviable in his possessions, and venerable in his equity.

Nor can I think that the risk of loss is great in the matter under discussion. I have often been told that any one who will read Kant, Strauss, and the rest of the German metaphysicians and divines, resolutely through, and give his whole strength to the study of them, will, after ten or twelve years' labour, discover that there is very little harm in them; and this I can well believe; but I believe also that the ten or twelve years may be better spent; and that any man who honestly wants philosophy not for show, but for *use*, and, knowing the Proverbs of Solomon, can, by way of commentary, afford to buy, in convenient editions, Plato, Bacon, Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Helps, will find that he has got as much as will be sufficient for him and his household during life, and of as good quality as need be.

It is also often declared necessary to study the German controversialists, because the grounds of religion "must be inquired into." I am sorry to hear they have not been inquired into yet; but if it be so, there are two ways of pursuing that inquiry: one for scholarly men, who have leisure on their hands, by reading all that they have time to read, for and

* I am truly sorry to have to introduce such words in an apparently irreverent way. But it would be a guilty reverence which prevented us from exposing fallacy, precisely where fallacy was most dangerous, and shrank from unveiling an error, just because that error existed in parlance respecting the most solemn subjects to which it could possibly be attached.

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[1] [For a full discussion of Turner's figure-drawing, see *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, No. 522 (Vol. XIII.); and compare *Modern Painters*, vol. i. (Vol. III. p. 325).]

against, and arming themselves at all points for controversy with all persons; the other,—a shorter and simpler way,—for busy and practical men, who want merely to find out how to live and die. Now for the learned and leisurely men I am not writing; they know what and how to read better than I can tell them. For simple and busy men, concerned much with art, which is eminently a practical matter, and fatigues the eyes, so as to render much reading inexpedient, I *am* writing; and such men I do, to the utmost of my power, dissuade from meddling with German books; not because I fear inquiry into the grounds of religion, but because the only inquiry which is *possible* to them must be conducted in a totally different way. They have been brought up as Christians, and doubt if they should remain Christians. They cannot ascertain, by investigation, if the Bible be true; but *if it be*, and Christ ever existed, and was God, then certainly, the Sermon which He has permitted for 1800 years to stand recorded as first of all His own teaching in the New Testament, must be true. Let them take that Sermon and give it fair practical trial: act out every verse of it, with no quibbling, nor explaining away, except the reduction of such *evidently* metaphorical expressions as "cut off thy foot," "pluck the beam out of thine eye," to their effectively practical sense.[1] Let them act out, or obey, every verse literally for a whole year, so far as they can,—a year being little enough time to give to an inquiry into religion; and if, at the end of the year, they are not satisfied, and still need to prosecute the inquiry, let them try the German system if they choose.

[1] [Matthew v. 29, 30, vii. 5.]

III

PLAGIARISM

Some time after I had written the concluding chapter of this work, the interesting and powerful poems of Emerson[1] were brought under my notice by one of the members of my class at the Working Men's College. There is much in some of these poems so like parts of the chapter in question, even in turn of expression, that though I do not usually care to justify myself from the charge of plagiarism, I felt that a few words were necessary in this instance.

I do not, as aforesaid, justify myself, in general, because I know there is internal evidence in my work of its originality, if people care to examine it; and if they do not, or have not skill enough to know genuine from borrowed work, my simple assertion would not convince them, especially as the charge of plagiarism is hardly ever made but by plagiarists, and persons of the unhappy class who do not believe in honesty but on evidence. Nevertheless, as my work is so much out of doors, and among pictures, that I have time to read few modern books, and am therefore in more danger than most people of repeating, as if it were new, what others have said, it may be well to note, once for all, that any such apparent plagiarism results in fact from my writings being more original than I wish them to be, from my having worked out my whole subject in unavoidable, but to myself hurtful, ignorance of the labours of others. On the other hand, I should be very sorry if I had *not* been continually taught and influenced by the writers whom I love; and am quite unable to say to what extent my thoughts have been guided by Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Helps; to whom (with Dante and George Herbert, in olden time) I owe more than to any other writers;—most of all, perhaps to Carlyle, whom I read so constantly, that, without wilfully setting myself to imitate him, I find myself perpetually falling into his modes of expression, and saying many things in a "quite other," and, I hope, stronger, way, than I should have adopted some years ago; as also there are things which I hope are said more clearly and simply than before, owing to the influence upon me of the beautiful *quiet* English of Helps.[2] It would be both foolish and wrong to struggle to cast off

[1] [Quoted above, p. 381. For a similar reference to Emerson's Essays, see *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pt. ix. ch. vii. § 23 *n*. So in *Time and Tide*, § 67, Emerson is classed with Carlyle among "our great teachers"; for a criticism of his *English Traits*, see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 26.]

[2] [For other references to Helps, see note at Vol. XI. p. 153; and for Carlyle, Vol. XII. p. 507.]

influences of this kind; for they consist mainly in a real and healthy help;—the master, in writing as in painting, showing certain methods of language which it would be ridiculous, and even affected, not to employ, when once shown; just as it would have been ridiculous in Bonifazio to refuse to employ Titian's way of laying on colour, if he felt it the best, because he had not himself discovered it. There is all the difference in the world between this receiving of guidance, or allowing of influence, and wilful imitation, much more, plagiarism; nay, the guidance may even innocently reach into local tones of thought, and must do so to some extent; so that I find Carlyle's stronger thinking colouring mine continually; and should be very sorry if I did not; otherwise I should have read him to little purpose. But what I have of my own is still all there, and I believe, better brought out, by far, than it would have been otherwise. Thus, if we glance over the wit and satire of the popular writers of the day, we shall find that the *manner* of it, so far as it is distinctive, is always owing to Dickens; and that out of his first exquisite ironies branched innumerable other forms of wit, varying with the disposition of the writers; original in the matter and substance of them, yet never to have been expressed as they now are, but for Dickens.

Many people will suppose that for several ideas in the chapters on landscape I was indebted to Humboldt's *Kosmos*, and Howitt's *Rural Scenery*.[1] I am indebted to Mr. Howitt's book for much pleasure, but for no suggestion, as it was not put into my hands till the chapters in question were in type. I wish it had been; as I should have been glad to have taken farther note of the landscape of Theocritus, on which Mr. Howitt dwells with just delight. Other parts of the book will be found very suggestive and helpful to the reader who cares to pursue the subject. Of Humboldt's *Kosmos*[2] I heard much talk when it first came out, and looked through it cursorily; but thinking it contained no material (connected with my subject) * which I had not already possessed myself of, I have never since referred to the work. I may be mistaken in my estimate of it, but certainly owe it absolutely nothing.

It is also often said that I borrow from Pugin.[3] I glanced at Pugin's

* See the Fourth Volume.

[1] [William Howitt: *The Rural Life of England*, 2 vols., 1838. The special reference is to ch. i. of part i. of vol. ii., where the author discusses the love of nature in modern and in classical literature; the landscape of Theocritus is noticed at pp. 7–11.]

[2] [Alexander von Humboldt: *Kosmos, Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung*, 5 vols., Stuttgart and Tubingen, 1845–1862. Twice translated into English (1846 and 1849) as *Cosmos, a Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*. Part i. of vol. ii. contains some cursory pages on descriptions of nature in Greek, Roman, and other literatures.]

[3] [As, for instance, in a review of the first volume of *The Stones of Venice*, in *The Ecclesiologist*, August 1851, vol. xi. p. 276: "Mr. Pugin himself might learn from Mr. Ruskin, had not (as is not improbable) Mr. Ruskin learnt it from him, to loathe all that is false and mean and meretricious in art." For Ruskin's views on Pugin, see Vol. IX. pp. 436–439.]

Contrasts once, in the Oxford architectural reading-room, during an idle forenoon. His "Remarks on Articles in the *Rambler*" were brought under my notice by some of the reviews. I never read a word of any other of his works, not feeling, from the style of his architecture, the smallest interest in his opinions.[1]

I have so often spoken, in the preceding pages, of Holman Hunt's picture of the Light of the World,[2] that I may as well, in this place, glance at the envious charge against it of being plagiarized from a German print.

It is indeed true that there was a painting of the subject before; and

[1] [The "Remarks on Articles in the *Rambler*" are noticed in Appendix 12 to *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. (Vol. IX. p. 437). The following letter bearing on the subject of the present Appendix is reprinted from the privately-printed *Letters from John Ruskin to Frederick J. Furnivall*, 1897, pp. 47–49:—

"London, *April 3rd*, 1855.

"Dear Furnivall,—Thursday will do excellently for me. I shall be most happy to see both Mrs. Wedgwood and Mrs. Gaskell. It may be that Kingsley may choose that day too, as I sent him another note yesterday with a carte-blanche. I think he must have missed one of my notes. Come to lunch at half-past one, if you have time so to arrange it with your friends.

"Faithfully yours,
"J. Ruskin.

"I have found a book of yours on Mormonism: please put me in mind if I don't return your books. I wish you would explain something to the Wedgwoods for me; I have never been quite at ease with them since it happened, and yet it was so absurdly trifling that I never liked to write about it. One day at their dinner-table Mr. Wedgwood said to me across it, 'So you have taken up Pugin's idea of comparisons!' I could not at the instant determine with myself whether Mr. Wedgwood really supposed that I never could have had the idea of putting an ugly and a pretty thing side by side, and saying, 'Which is best?' unless I had borrowed it from Pugin, or whether he merely meant that I had been carrying out the same idea; and as I never like to appear sensitive on the point of originality, and did not like to enter into a long assertion of my own independence across a dinner-table, I simply bowed, in a very confused manner, which I have often thought since must have appeared to all the company like the confusion of a person detected in a plagiarism—whereas it was, in fact, the confusion of a person not knowing whether it was worth while, or a proper occasion, to assert his non-plagiarism. I do not know what Mr. Wedgwood's impression was, but I wish you would now explain this to him, and assure him that whatever I owe—and it is at least two-thirds of what I am—to other people, I certainly owe nothing to Pugin,—except two *facts*, one about Buttresses, and one about ironwork. I owe, I know not how much, to Carlyle, and after him to Wordsworth, Hooker, Herbert, Dante, Tennyson, and about another dozen of people. But assuredly *Nothing* to Pugin.

"Always yours,
"J. Ruskin."]

[2] [See above, pp. 52, 65, 86, 109, and Vol. XII. pp. 328–332. Holman Hunt thus refers to the subject here noted: "When the subject of Christ knocking at the door first was undertaken by me, I thought it had never been treated before. I knew Longfellow's volume fairly well, but I had no memory of having read the

there were, of course, no paintings of the Nativity before Raphael's time, nor of the Last Supper before Leonardo's, else those masters could have laid no claim to originality. But what was still more singular (the verse to be illustrated being, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"), the principal figure in the antecedent picture was knocking at a door, knocking with its right hand, and had its face turned to the spectator! Nay, it was even robed in a long robe, down to its feet. All these circumstances were the same in Mr. Hunt's picture; and as the chances evidently were a hundred to one that if he had not been helped to the ideas by the German artist, he would have represented the figure as *not* knocking at any door, as turning its back to the spectator, and as dressed in a short robe, the plagiarism was considered as demonstrated. Of course no defence is possible in such a case. All I can say is, that I shall be sincerely grateful to any unconscientious persons who will adapt a few more German prints in the same manner.

Finally, touching plagiarism in general, it is to be remembered that all men who have sense and feeling are being continually helped: they are taught by every person whom they meet, and enriched by everything that falls in their way. The greatest is he who has been oftenest aided; and, if the attainments of all human minds could be traced to their real sources, it would be found that the world had been laid most under contribution by the men of most original power, and that every day of their existence deepened their debt to their race, while it enlarged their gifts to it. The labour devoted to trace the origin of any thought, or any invention, will usually issue in the blank conclusion that there is nothing new under the sun: yet nothing that is truly great can ever be altogether borrowed; and he is commonly the wisest, and is always the happiest, who receives simply, and without envious question, whatever good is offered him, with thanks to its immediate giver.

beautiful sonnet from 'Lope de Vega.' On coming to town I went to see the German prints of the subject, spoken of to me by a friend as forestalling my picture, but they were such meaningless vapidities that I became more content with my theme" (*Contemporary Review*, June 1886, p. 827). The sonnet, of which Longfellow's translation appeared first in the volume entitled *Coplas de Manrique* (1833), begins—

> "Lord, what am I, that, with unceasing care,
> Thou should'st seek after me—that Thou should'st wait,
> Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
> And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?"

Two German prints of the subject were in the shop-windows at the time when Hunt's picture was in progress.]

[Added in this Edition.]

IV

A LETTER ON "MODERN PAINTERS," VOL. III

[A reader of the third volume of *Modern Painters*, Miss M. S. Lockwood, was puzzled by what seemed a contradiction between paragraphs 7 and 40 of chapter xiv. (see above, p. 230 *n.*). She wrote to the author explaining her difficulty, and asking him further to explain the use of the word "anatomical" as applied to trees in chapter ix., § 12 (p. 161). Ruskin (mistaking his correspondent for a man) wrote the following letter in reply, the postmark being dated Dec. 13, 1856:—]

"My dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for reading so carefully, and pointing out to me the discrepancy in question, very carelessly left unexplained. The first paragraph is speaking of the *habitual* mood of casual everyday contemplation, which was light with the mediæval and deep with the Greek. The other paragraph (40), of the sealing difference in the hard work and thought of the two. The flower was honoured by the Greek as God's gift to *him;* by the mediæval as God's work for God's self, beautiful in itself and venerable, irrespective of its being a gift to *him* at all, so that —though the mediæval when he was at play in the fields was far less serious than the Greek (not expecting to meet Pan or Diana)—when he set himself to *work* he was far *more* serious than the Greek, carving the flower for its own sake and God's sake, not merely for a conventional ornament of vase—or hair—undelighted in, except as connected with himself.

"But the two passages require expanding and explaining; and, in part, they *are* contradictory, describing two contradictory aspects of both minds; just as, if you divide two balls into red and blue—look at them from one side—and one is blue and the other red; and look at them from the other, and the first is red and the second blue. There are many subjects which involve this species of reversed light before you can work them out thoroughly.

"Anatomical laws in trees are, of course, the laws of their cellular growth —angles of branches, etc., which are just as *stern* as *laws* as those of the growth of animals. A law may be that you go into two, or three, or into an indefinite number of fields, but so long as it says positively, you must go into houses, or must do *something*, the law is as stern law, whether it says two, or three, or indefinite number. So the laws about vegetable growth are vague, admitting of *more alternatives* than in animal growth. But they

are just as stern. The law that a branch branches into its own quantity of wood, and no more, is as stern as that our hands shall branch only into five fingers.

"Truly yours,
"J. RUSKIN.

"'Anatomical' means, I believe, only 'cutting up' law. You may cut up a tree as well as a beast. Laws of *structure* would be a better word, or of organisms."[1]

[1] [This letter is reprinted from *St. George* (the Journal of the Ruskin Union), April 1902, vol. v. p. 166.]

V

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FROM THE MSS.

[The manuscript of the third volume of *Modern Painters* is among the Pierpont Morgan (formerly Allen) MSS. referred to in Vol. III. p. 682, and Vol. IV. p. 361. It represents two stages of the author's work :—

(1) An early draft, in three different volumes. The first of these (numbered by Ruskin "19") contains portions of the early chapters, and also *The Harbours of England*. The second (numbered "15 A") contains portions of some of the later chapters, and also *The Opening of the Crystal Palace*. The third contains portions of chapters in different parts of the volume, and also several chapters of the fourth volume.

(2) On 390 foolscap leaves, the MS., at a later stage of composition, of the Preface and Chapters i. to xviii. (down to the end of § 32). There is no MS. of the conclusion of that chapter or of the appendices. This MS. was that sent to the compositors; but the text was very heavily corrected in proof.

The early draft includes a good deal of additional matter, not incorporated in the text. The chapters were, it seems, to have been differently arranged, and allowed of discussions which had afterwards to be omitted or only briefly glanced at. Two such passages, dealing respectively with Magnitude and Moderation in art, are here given. Each was to have formed the subject of a separate chapter. The first, dealing with Magnitude, is briefly referred to in ch. iii. §§ 18, 19 (pp. 61–62) of the text] :[1]—

MAGNITUDE

"In order to receive an accurate idea of what is meant by greatness of style, we must consider what greatness itself consists in; and this in its two great orders—material and moral. For a truly great

[1] [The subject is also treated by Ruskin in *The Poetry of Architecture*, §§ 221 *seq.* (Vol. I. pp. 164–165); *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. pp. 309–311); vol. v. pt. viii. ch. iii.; *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Vol. VIII. pp. 103–107; *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. (Vol. XI. p. 79); *Mornings in Florence*, § 72; and *Notes on Prout and Hunt*, Preface, § 41.]

style is that which unites the representation of material greatness with a moral greatness in the mode of regarding it.

"We have first to examine in what material greatness consists; that is to say, what are the qualities of objects which impress us with the idea of their being Large.

"In ordinary parlance, we call objects large or small after comparing them with the average size which such objects attain. We call a moth large, if it be larger than moths usually are; and a mountain small, if it be smaller than the others in its neighbourhood. But a more essential idea of largeness is derived from our comparison of things with ourselves. We naturally call things small which are smaller than a man, and large which are larger than a man; we look upon wrens and sparrows, for instance, as small creatures, and upon elephants and rhinoceroses as large creatures; and we derive ideas of sublimity from the bulk of these latter which we could not receive from a wren or a sparrow, however large of its species.

"In order to produce these peculiar impressions of sublimity on the human mind, certain degrees of this material largeness are absolutely necessary. No beauty of design in architecture, or of form in mountains, will entirely take the place of what may be called 'brute largeness.' That is to say, of the actual superiority in feet and inches, over the size of Humanity, our constant standard, the general truth being that—*cæteris paribus*—the greatest effect of sublimity will be produced by the largest truth which can be clearly manifested to us. When bulk reaches certain limits, it becomes incomprehensible and immeasurable; and this uncomprehended bulk is, of course, useless—as far as regards any effect to be produced on the human mind. A space of sea, reaching to the horizon (say, perhaps, twenty miles square of water), and covered with large waves, will produce as great an effect of sublimity on most minds as anything can: the surface of the moon, though three thousand miles across, produces no such impression, because its size is not comprehended.

"The power of comprehending size is one of those which is most capable of cultivation; and—*cæteris paribus*—the mind which can measure the largest bulks, can receive the highest impressions of sublimity. Up to a certain point, the apprehension of size is indeed instructive, but this is only within very narrow limits; and as soon as those limits are past — that is to say, as soon as any object is more than about a hundred feet wide or high—the understanding of its magnitude depends on careful observation and accurate comparison of part with part, more and more difficult in proportion as the size increases; and however the power of such estimate may be increased by cultivation, the human mind never can quite comprehend the full size of distant things; so that universally all very large objects look smaller than they really are, and are more and more under-estimated in proportion to their magnitude—so that a mountain is always less justly estimated than a cathedral, and a great mountain always less justly than a small one. I do not mean that it is thought less than the small one—but it is not thought so much

greater as it really is. The wall of a cathedral, 150 feet high, produces an impression of magnitude nearly true,* but a cliff 500 feet high will not produce much more than twice the impression of the cathedral wall; and a mountain 3000 feet high will not produce much more than twice the impression of the cliff of 500. I have observed that, for the most part, the human mind seems most distinctly addressed by magnitudes under a thousand feet, brought well into the sphere of sight; so that with advantages of form, colour, and position, I think nearly as great an impression would be made by a bold precipice of 800 or 900 feet in height as is generally received from the Mont Blanc itself. For partly from the want of attention, and partly from the want of experience (objects of so great size having been seldom seen), with respect to heights above a thousand feet the ordinary observer is quite incapable of comparison. He is impressed by merely accidental circumstances of form and atmospheric effect, and is rarely more affected by a slope of 9000 or 10,000 feet, than by one of 1200.

"And the frequent comparisons made between the mountain scenery of our own island and that of Switzerland, as if they were in any wise capable of comparison, are a very sufficient proof of this. When once the eye has been taught to estimate magnitude justly, mountains in Scotland or Wales cease to exist, after a month spent among the Alps. Our own best scenery then becomes nothing more than pretty rocky country, rising here and there into a cairn of dark slate—or a heap of morass. But most travellers pass through the Alps without the slightest understanding of the scale of the objects around them, and derive their principal impressions not from the actual magnitude, but from the bolder forms of the Alpine rocks, and their various phenomena of snow and glacier; so that, putting these phenomena (which to many persons are more curious than sublime) out of the question, they are able to return to lower mountains without any very painful sense of their inferiority.

"Now there are two principal reasons for this insensibility: one based on a great power, the other on a great fault, of human nature. The feeling of magnificence or sublimity in the bulk of any object depends always in a great degree on the exertion of imagination. Upon torpid or prosaic temper, bulk produces hardly any effect, and in proportion as men decline towards the rank of animals, they are capable of less and less wonder at it. A dull peasant, entirely uneducated, seems to be little more impressible by the size of the mountain on which he dwells than an ant is by the size of the tree at whose root it has its nest. While, on the other hand, the emotions which educated men feel at magnitude appear to be very complicated, involving many subtle processes of the imagination, and many strange half-unconscious apprehensions of divine power or natural force. I cannot analyze the feeling, but one thing is certain, that before it

* But not quite true, for I suppose no one, however accurate his eye, ever ascended to the roof of a cathedral without finding the upper pinnacles larger than he thought them.

can take place the imagination must be excited, and the mind must take a kind of spiritual possession of the object, which, when once it is in the temper to do it, matters little whether that object be really of great magnitude or not. If it has had influence enough to put the imagination into train, or if the spectator have the will to raise himself into the mood of reverence, hundreds or thousands of feet are comparatively of small importance, and in a healthy tone of thought he will find more sublimity in a pretty crag of Derbyshire limestone than in a coldness and languor he could see in fifty leagues of Alps.

"Nor is this feeling false—though it is imagination. Imagination in this sense is nothing more than the complete perception of the inner truth of the thing; there are, in verity, in the humblest scenery, powers in operation vast enough, and masses of material existence large enough, to excite the full sensation of sublimity; and it is necessary to be very careful how we deaden this faculty of finding sublimity in things comparatively small by over-indulgence in the excitement of greater magnificence. For though it is the nature of the imagination to rouse itself with little help, yet it will never start but from the highest point it can reach; its ambition is insatiable; it always fixes on the largest thing it has in sight; and if, presently, anything still greater be offered to it, it flies to that, and instantly spurns what it before thought majestic. And this avarice of the imagination increases with the stimulus; and the more it obtains, the more it conceives it possible to obtain; and it may be pushed at last into a morbid hunger, in which it has nearly lost its own inherent power, but continually craves an increase of external excitement—and at last dies of pure repletion."

MODERATION

[The second and more fragmentary passage is related to the text in ch. x. § 14 (p. 182), and (in the last paragraphs) with ch. xvii. § 6 (p. 358); but it connects also, as will be seen, with what is said under the head of "Magnitude"]:[1]—

"The more experience men have of life (provided it be wisely used), the more they will come to look upon it in the light of a continual combat and Government. A combat against distinct principles of evil; a Government, in its dealings with things in themselves good, but which become evil when they are mismanaged. So that there is hardly a moment of existence but we have in it something to resist, or something to guide, which unresisted, or ill-guided, will assuredly turn to evil. And as this Guidance again divides itself into two great branches—one consisting in Restraint, when things good in themselves become evil in excess; and the other in Direction, when things good

[1] [On the subject of moderation and restraint in art, see also *Modern Painters*, vols. ii. and iv. (Vol. IV. pp. 135 *seq.*; Vol. VI. p. 327; and *Seven Lamps*, Vol. VIII. pp. 134, 259.]

in themselves become evil if misapplied—personal virtue has in all ages been resolved into three great branches of Fortitude, or resistance to pure evil; Temperance, or restraint in things capable of excess; and Prudence, or right judgment in things capable of error.

"Among these three virtues, it seems to me, that men in general least feel the full scope and bearing of Temperance; that Courage and judgment are commoner than mere self-restraint; and that men can oftener go where they ought, or stand where they ought, than stop where they ought. At least, in the particular branches of study into which I have been led, I find that Providence seems through various symbols and in various ways to insist upon the need of temperance far more than of the other virtues. I find in art, power and success depending continually upon a 'Not too much,'—and I find in nature, the enjoyments of the finest and highest kind, liable to perpetual loss from over covetousness of them. So that the explanation of what is right in art, or lovely in scenery, resolve themselves almost tiresomely into sections of an essay on Temperance; and whether we have to treat of beautiful form, or beautiful colour, or sublimity of effect, or grace of gesture, we shall find ourselves always driven back into the same insistence upon the habit of self-control. It will perhaps be less tiresome to point out at once the various modes in which this virtue is either demanded or illustrated in the matters before us; and afterwards to trace by themselves the elements of right which it modifies.

"And first, it is of singular importance in regulating the quantity of work which we give to the imagination. I mean here by the imagination that faculty which takes possession with the heart of what is seen by the eyes. For without a certain mental exertion, made as it were in sympathy with sight, it does not matter how beautiful the things may be which pass before us; we shall receive no pleasure from them. There are indeed certain forms and colours which please the eye as certain sounds do the ear; but when the heart is pre-occupied, or exhausted, these forms and colours have no longer any power, they pass before us as ineffectively as it may be supposed they do before animals. In an ordinary healthy state of mind the imagination exerts itself instinctively; and that which appears beautiful to the eye is fed upon by the heart, suggesting all kinds of pleasant and fruitful thoughts, and becoming in us a source of perpetual newness of life. But the form of this visible food, to nourish us, depends absolutely on the force of the Imagination by which it is received—and that force is limited. The quantity of Imagination which the mind can give forth is just as fixed as the muscular power which can be developed by the body; the Imagination may be as easily overtaxed as the limbs, and the moment it is exhausted, all the occupation which we give to the bodily sight is a weariness, and I think has even a tendency to destroy the spring of the Imagination for the future. Temperance, therefore, in the use of the imagination, is one of the most important means of enjoying nature truly, and one of the greatest powers of art is that of supplying the imagination with exactly the food it requires—and no more. It is therefore very necessary that we

should thoroughly understand the modes in which the mind operates, and can be addressed in these respects.

"And first, let me make my meaning as clear as possible in the use of the word "Imagination."* I do not use it here in the limited, though accurate sense, in which it is defined in the second volume of this work. I mean by it here the entire operation of the Humanity within us, the sum of the mental powers which, at the sight of any object, are set to work to take possession of it; which contemplate its nature, perceive and admire its peculiar virtues, or which refresh it with wonder, sanctify it with association, and gild or darken it with the subtle dyes of hope and memory, and I understand this power to be operating altogether, like notes of music, but all forming a perfect harmony.

"For instance, suppose that several persons are looking at a pine tree, not having seen one for some time. To one, it will perhaps bring back some happy or painful association, and then he will forget the pine tree, and follow the train of thought it has called up. In him the note of memory has been struck too hard for harmony. Another will be impressed by the uprightness of the tree, and by the way in which it holds the rocks with its roots, and presently he will set himself to examine their fibres, and discover the process of its growth. In him the note of wonder has been struck too hard for harmony. Another will be impressed by the splendour of its dark green, and beauty of the lines of its branches, and will set himself to enjoy these without any further thought about the matter. In him the note of pleasure has been struck too hard for harmony.

* I have always felt this so important a matter, that I devoted the whole second volume of this work to an investigation of the faculties of mind which were chiefly concerned in our admiration of nature; and though, on looking back to this second volume after the lapse of nine years, I find it disfigured by affectations and encumbered by obscurities, and heartily wish I had it to write over again, still the main statements of it are all true, and I think its meaning may be got at with as little pains as that of metaphysical works in general. It contains what I intended it to contain for future reference; and though I am sorry to have to refer to anything so difficult to read, I do not think it would be wise to give up the time necessary to rewrite it; for there are perhaps some qualities in the writing of a young man which, though we may despise in more advanced life, are yet useful to persons in the same temper of mind in which the writer was at the time. Therefore, begging the sensible reader to pardon the involutions of language, the imitations of Hooker, and the tiresome length of sentences, I shall permit myself to refer to the book as if it had been better written, especially as I may be able now with a few words so to explain its contents as to spare the reader a good deal of trouble in analyzing them.

It divides the faculties of mind concerned in the contemplation of Nature into two great branches—one passive, the other active; one receiving delight from external things, the other so modifying and regarding external things as to increase this delight. The passive power I called Theoria, and the active, Imagination. The adoption of the term Theoria was pure pedantry.[1]

[1] [But see Vol. IV. pp. xlviii.–xlix.]

And a fourth will be impressed by the coiling and fantastic labyrinth of its roots, and will begin to fancy them Dragons, or arms of demons, and the hair of a transformed Dryad fastened to the earth. And in him the note of fancy has been struck too hard for harmony. And most people in looking at nature, according to their profession and turn of mind, have of course some tendency to overbalance themselves in one direction or another, taking out of the thing that only which they are in the habit of seeking in their ordinary life. And this is so far a healthy and happy tendency, for we can thus go on without fatigue continually."

END OF VOLUME V

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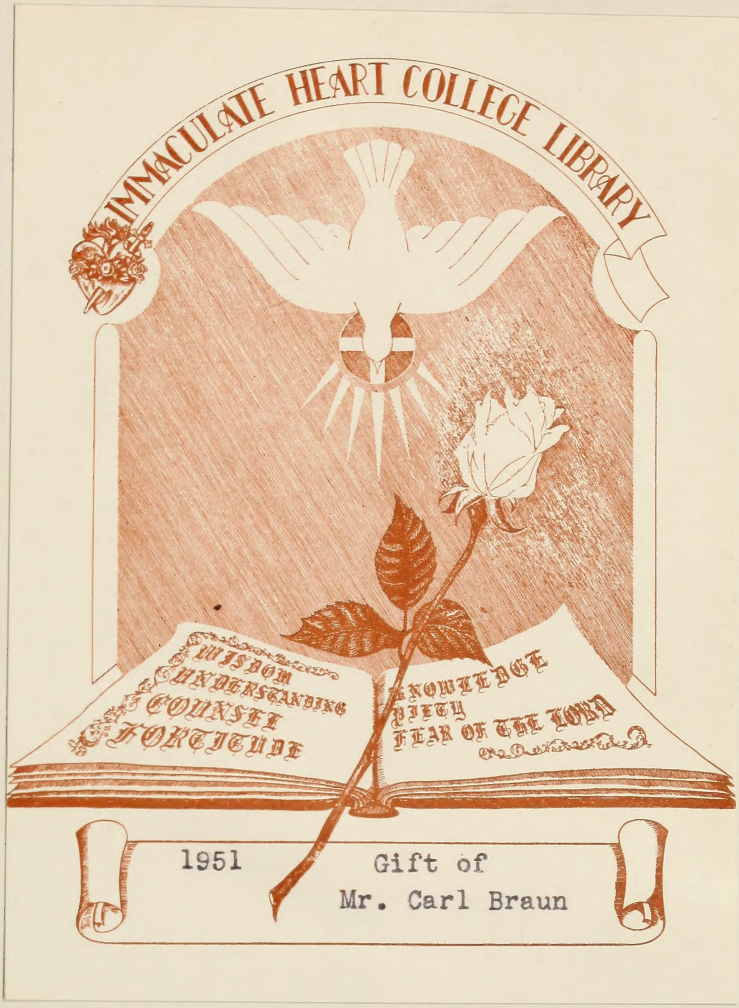

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